Drafted

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Category: Ninjago
Genre: Adventure, Angst
Language: English
Status: In-Progress
Published: 2013-05-06
Updated: 2013-08-24
Packaged: 2013-09-29 01:38:46
Rating: T
Chapters: 12
Words: 33,210
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net
Story URL: http://www.fanfiction.net/s/9268275/1/
Author URL: http://www.fanfiction.net/u/3593693/Nevermore-evermore
Summary: Kai, a royal blacksmith with a rebellious younger sister. Cole, a laborer in the mines desperate to escape. Zane, a robotic slave afraid of death. Jay, a failing inventor. Fate brings them together when they're all drafted for the war against the Dark Island. Put in the same troop, they have to fight together. But do they even want to fight for their nation?

1. Chapter 1

****WARNING! PLEASE READ BEFORE CONTINUING: ****This story includes bondage, minor sexual harassment, swearing, violence, gore, character abuse, sexism (I am a female writing this, so please do not see me as sexist), some extreme cases of racism, and dark themes.**

*******_**THERE IS NO SEXUAL CONTENT IN THIS FANFICTION: **_**The most sexual content there is are mentions, and some(minor) harassment. I assure you that all is appropriate for the T category. **

This story is anthropomorphism. The characters are humans, not Lego. Zane still continues to be a robot. I do hope you read along and enjoy either way.

**Disclaimer: I do not own Lego Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu. **

Claimer: I own any original characters, and the elements, which this story possesses.

-The Suburbs, Ninjago City-

"Zane, get me some wine."

The idea of rebellion floats around his mind. It does with every order, in fact. But it's not his fault he was created into a world like this.

Created.

To him, the word is as important as the word _birth. _His vocabulary is the same, if not a little more advanced then humans, but he uses different words for different things. If a new computer user were to pick a certain type of English for their computer, this is what would show up:

English (Robotic)

When his mistress was choosing which language to use on her computer, she had scrolled past it, giving an obnoxious _humph! _After all, to her eyes, and everyone else's, he was lower in human ranks.

The ladder is intriguing, but nothing out of the ordinary.

Royalty

Members of the royal court

_Peasants _

Women and children

_Laborers _

Robotic beings

The list had been handed out a long time ago, given to every living being in the nation. Now, if women are lower than peasants, why is he in slavery for one? Simple. If you were to think about it clearly, women have about just as many rights as men, but they need permission to do certain things. They're expected to stay at home and take care of their family. Since women are higher in the ranks than robots, it's possible for them to own one.

"Zane, the wine."

He shakes his head, trying to clear his mind of thoughts. He has a bad habit of thinking, something punishable by death for robots.

The woman he serves lives in a typical home, her husband always on the job, which leaves for Zane to be the one to take care of her. The living room, where his mistress awaits, is a typical one. A love seat, a chair, and a television. A light beige carpet, pale green walls, and a stone chimney.

He opens the fridge, taking out a bottle of white wine, the only kind his mistress enjoys drinking. He pours it into the clear glass, carefully. He

cannot spill it. For if he does, he will be punished, something he tries to avoid as much as possible. He will lie, deceive, and sometimes create stories so he will not get hurt. But it's not the pain that he's so afraid of, no, it's being rejected. Not in a love sense, but a reject in the slavery sense. He does not want to be sent back to the processing unit he was trained and prepared in. He was lucky to even survive.

After all, he had seen plenty of his friends die of illness or execution there.

He puts the glass of wine on a round tray. He picks it up, bringing it over to the living room, where his mistress takes it between her thin fingers. "Good boy. Now, go off into the market. We need more bread."

"Yes, mistress."

She whips her head to face him. "Did I say you could speak?"

"N-"

Before Zane replies, he cuts himself off, shaking his head instead.

His mistress laughs, a cruel edge to it.

"Go off."

-Market place, Ninjago City-

The coat is enough to cover his arms, the hood big enough to hide his face. It's just what he wants. If people find out he's a robot, he'll be chased out of town. In some cases, like he had witnessed before, killed. Things happen when you're at the bottom of the ranking list. When at the bottom, you can be murdered, raped, beaten, kidnapped, and nobody would get in trouble. Because if he fought back, he would be killed.

The injustice had always disgusted him. It's not like he wanted to be created in that factory, to be sold after years of preparing. To be threatened against his life everyday. To be beaten, insulted, and yelled at if he showed what he was in public. To leave one hellhole and enter another everytime he was resold.

The market place is busy. After the walk from the suburbs to the city, the one thing Zane hadn't been wanting to see were the people whom he called _The Gang._

They spend their time deliberately looking for robots or laborers they could beat, trying to improve their strength. Though their cowardice can show obviously if you look carefully. They usually pick on the robots. Why? Because laborers are allowed to fight back.

He begins to place different kinds of bread in his basket. Loafs, baguettes, bagels… nearly every kind of wheat product available. Though it's not like there's too many, due to the fact that it takes a long time for the wheat to get there from Ignacia and all.

A hand grabs Zane's hood, pulling it down with such force it causes Zane to fall to the ground. Realizing his hood isn't covering his glowing blue eyes anymore, and noticing the large crowd looking at him, he fumbles trying to put it back on, while the usually noisy crowd falls silent.

Zane stands up.

But he's immediately thrown back down.

A swift kick to the face sends the basket flying out of his hand, spilling the contents that were inside. He doesn't mind, it's not that bad. Though it's what might come that brings immense fear to his mind. The fear of death.

The fear becomes alive when someone comes forward with a knife. A jagged blade, made for opening flesh and stabbing. It's that one fact this causes Zane's eyes to widen. He's seen what they do to the robots they find. They slide through the artificial skin, chop off the limbs, and eventually stab or decapitate the victim. And he'll have to be alive through it all.

Something most humans don't understand about robots is that they feel pain. They're given emotions, senses, knowledge, everything a human has. Yet it's what they are that sets them apart. What they are, robots, were created to serve humans as simple calculators, or teachers. They were created for knowledge. But once the humans decided to begin using them as something else, they were created differently. They were given typical human bodies, capable of lifting heavy things, of multi-tasking, cook well, and the things most humans want in the perfect slave. But they didn't want to just create slaves, without emotions or anything. No, they wanted to be able to look down on them, to be able to feel powerful. To feel above something, even if they're not royalty.

As the man comes closer to Zane, knife in hand, he smirks. "What's wrong? Afraid to get a little blade in ya?"

Maybe if he could convince him he's new he'll let him go. "What are you doing?"

The crowd laughs, and Zane notices some people leaving. Other robots escaping, probably relieved, happy that one of them is dying so that they won't. It's a scary world, to be a robot. It causes the robots to believe that they're all worthless beings, to believe that if one of them dies, it doesn't matter, because they're not even considered a real life form. Because there are already hundreds of them being made in factories, right? So what's one dying going to do?

Absolutely nothing.

"You must be new 'round these parts. We're gonna kill ya, that's what we're gonna do!" the man replies, grammar forgotten in the moment.

Zane looks around nervously, on the verge of tears. He begins hyperventilating. Fear does so much to ruin ones act, even if the act is one being used to stay alive. "You are lacking enunciation, allow me to teach you!"

The man laughs. "I don't need some grammar-freak teaching me how to speak English! I speak it just fine!"

Zane goes for the opening. "I am so sorry to be a 'grammar-freak', but it is in my nature. I simply cannot let a crime against English slip away!"

The man raises the knife. "You saying I'm a crime against English?"

"Not you, but merely your way of pronouncing it! Please, allow me to teach you proper pronunciation, and you will get all of the women after you!" Zane blurts out.

The man laughs, and brings the knife into Zane's stomach. Zane screams in pain, tears pouring out of his eyes, and begins begging for the man to take the knife out. "P-please, t-take it out…"

The man laughs, enjoying the robots misery.

"Please… I-I beg y-you, just t-take it out…"

The man leans forward, and rips the knife out in one motion. The knife is stained with blue blood, something robots are recognized for. Something Zane didn't wish he had.

He curls up in a ball, clutching his stomach while the crowd laughs at him. The man leans into Zane's face, and whispers slowly, "You know, I think I'll let you live, because you're so new. But if I see you again, I won't hesitate to put this knife where your cold, nonhuman heart is!"

With that, the crowd goes off to their business, some stepping on Zane as they pass. The tears continue to fall out of his eyes, blurring his vision.

He stands up, gut-wrenching pain filling his stomach. If he's lucky, his mistress will only beat him for this. Maybe he won't have to go back to that factory, and have to go through all the pain and torture again. Maybe he can continue living the happy life he's living now. A life where if he does what he's told, he won't have to die. Where he will never have to face his fears again.

He picks up the bread and puts it into the basket, but not without being pushed onto the concrete a few times. He wants to get out of there as quickly as possible. Just because the man didn't kill him, doesn't mean others won't lunge at the chance. Killing a robot brings honor, as killing one on the rank below you always does. Killing one higher than you on the rank is punishable by death. Zane may not kill anyone, and he does not plan to face the consequence.

Once the bread is in the basket, he scurries out of the market place as fast as possible. Once he's out of sight, he rips off his shirt and wraps it around the wound, tying it at the back. He's picked up plenty of strategies on how to survive over the years, some from other robots, some from those medical dramas his mistress watches often. He would often sneak into the living room to watch, desperate to learn how to save himself from the cold claws of death.

He walks down the empty streets of the suburbs, some gardens being tended to by robots. Some wave to him, giving looks of concern and motioning to the bloodied cloth around his stomach. Everytime he merely does a stabbing motion to his stomach, points to the tall buildings nearby, and gets an understanding nod. They've all been there at some point.

He turns the corner, and comes across the street his mistress lives on. The houses are all the same. Cute little two floor houses, yellow on the outside with gray roofs. Though, surprisingly, Zane is one of the two slaves on this street. It's something uncommon in the local neighborhoods.

He throws on his shirt, and groans. It's soaked in blood, and not only is his mistress going to scream and beat him, but he already has a deep stomach wound. Though fear replaces the complaining as he begins to get closer. His fear of death consumes the last of the courage he had, and causes him to nearly turn around and head back. But maybe, if his mistress could show some kind of compassion, he could get away with it. After all, it wasn't his fault. No one was able to see anything, the man just got lucky.

With the thought of success in his mind, he walks into the house, to see his mistress waiting in the front hall, tapping her foot. She wears a skin-tight black dress on her pale, thin body. She wears black high heels, which compliment her dark hair. Yet her face says everything. The face of those evil stepmothers in fairy tales. The stepmother who attempt to kill their husband's children. Or enslaves them, or tricks them into a witches home, or sends a huntsman after them.

"Where were you?" she demands, looking at him up and down.

"I was in the market, mistress."

"And what happened in the market?"

"I got stabbed," he replies, wincing.

"And just _how _did that happen?"

"A man pulled down my cloak, ma'am. He only got lucky I swear!"

"You see, Zane, I don't appreciate getting phone calls from my neighbors saying my robot is walking down the street with his shirt off, seemingly wrapped around a wound you _could _have prevented, had you not been so careless." She crosses her arms across her chest, frown of disapproval on her face.

"I had no choice, mistress. I would have died on the spot if I did not wrap it around the wound!"

Zane barely has time to see the lash that strikes his side. His mistress had been holding a whip, which had blended in with the darkness of her dress. Zane falls to the ground, clutching his side. "You incompetent fool! You think you're worth it?! Had you been prepared right, you would have known you should have died before taking off your clothes, which I so generously gave to you!" she screams at him, fury in her voice. "Or should I make you go around nude like some of the others make their robots do?"

He hangs his head down, knowing he can't do anything but accept what's coming. "No, mistress."

"Good. Now, you realize you're leaving now, right?"

Zane gulps, images of the factory flashing in his mind, and he can barely stop the tears. He doesn't want to go back there.

She laughs. "Not back to the factory. No, our country is starting a war with the Dark Island, you know, where Lord Garmadon rules? Well they're asking each family to give in a family member, and since my husband's business is so important, and I'm a woman, we're sending you."

Zane thinks.

War: A state of conflict between two countries. Those who fight in wars are called soldiers.

War soldier: A person who serves in battle during wars. If a soldier dies during battle, the family of the deceased soldier gets a message.

These messages are mass-produced during wars, as soldiers die often.

Die often.

Die.

Zane puts his hands over his eyes, trying to stop the tears from coming down. He begins hyperventilating again, and he does what he can to not scream.

"The bus will be here to pick you up in half an hour. Don't bother packing up your things. I used them to feed the fire."

Zane continues silently sobbing on the floor, the word _die _repeating in his mind constantly. His mistress exits the front hall, leaving him to sob in front of the front door, blue blood running heavily down his stomach.

Die.

Die.

Die.

That's the end of the first prologue. If you didn't read the author's notes on top, check those out because they're really important! So, please review, and I hope you like it!

**~Emily **

2. Chapter 2

**This chapter will follow how Jay was drafted. Letting you know in advance that the writing style depends on the mood, generally. This chapter's writing will be a little more happy-go-lucky than the Zane chapter. **

This chapter will be notably shorter, as Jay's life has nothing exciting to it.

***** PLEASE READ: ****I am warning you in advance that some things require imagination. I give you the information and you must put two-and-two together. If you have any questions please PM me or leave a review*****

**Please read the warning in the first chapter if you have not already. **

**I'll make this short: This chapter will NOT be as angst-filled as Zane's was, or Cole's will be. For the first four chapters I'm merely trying to show all of the positions in the caste, other than royalty. I am also trying to get across the harshness of the world. **

**EdgeChronicles01: That's a decent question. I would have to answer with the second one, that robots can have illnesses like human beings, so yes. Though for the virus part, I would say it could be another possibility. **

-Jamanakai Village, Ninjago-

Jay wipes the sweat off his forehead with a dirty cloth, and sighs. "Wrench." He commands, stretches out his hand, and feels the cold metal land in his palm. He turns the bolt, giving off a slight smile.

The business had been slow lately. With the war coming up, no one needed any new inventions, or repairs for their robots. He hasn't had a visitor to his shop in weeks, and it was beginning to run him poor. He never really had much to begin with, and now that he's running out of business, the revenue has dropped to a dangerous amount. The taxes seem to come at full force, the ringing of the phone always echoing through the empty shop as the tax companies try to contact him.

"Master, is it all right if I take some time off? It seems as though your shop is empty, so I don't believe it necessary for me to be here. If that's okay with you, of course."

Jay turns around. His robot stands at the door, sweating from the unforgiving sun. Jay had bought him to help the customers look around the shop, which at the time of the purchase, had always been full.

He considers the request. His shop has indeed been depressingly lacking of people, and it wouldn't do him very good if his robot melts from the rays.

"Yeah, I guess so." He replies. He looks down at his new invention. He had been trying to create his _own _robot, something that could be everything someone wanted. His robot wouldn't have emotions, or feelings. It would be the perfect slave.

His robot bows. "Thank you, master."

"I'll call you if I need you!" Jay shouts as the robot leaves the shop.

All alone, he groans. He slams his head against the desk, trying to get ideas into his head. Just how could he create a machine without emotions? Would people even buy it? After all, they liked their slaves to have emotions and feel things, so they know that when they hurt them or yell at them, it has an effect. So to most owners, a robot's fear brings a smile to their face.

He looks at the schedule on his wall. Like most men his age, he's supposed to be finding a woman to marry, but so far, he just can't find the one for him.

The schedule intimidates him. He had created it the night before, hoping that he could finally find the wife for him. A tough one. One who fights for what she believes in, who doesn't want to just stay at home and take care of the children, who would much rather live a man's life than a woman's.

He stands up. Maybe he can find her today. Maybe that woman is waiting for him outside, roaming the market, waiting to be picked by a man just like a him. Waiting to finally be found in this world, waiting for him to sweep her off of her feet and bring her home.

He strides over to the mirror, looking at his reflection. He wouldn't go as far as to call himself attractive. Yet he believes he's not ugly. Not that it matters, anyways. Men have the privilege to pick a woman off of the street, claim her as a spouse, and have children together. You may claim a woman as a wife as long as they're over thirteen, but the age of consent is sixteen.

Jay sighs. Being a woman must be terrifying. After all, there are no charges for harming or sexually abusing one. Men are supposed to believe they're stronger, to believe that they need to protect their families form dangers, gets the jobs, fight in the wars. Women are supposed to

believe that they need to stay at home, raise the children, and order around the slaves.

To not leave their home unless their husband says so.

He exits his shop, and walks to the village square. In the very center is the place he had gotten to know so well. He's seen so many events happen here, so many people walk up on that stage, some proud, some filled to the core with shame. The order of the amount of people going up there is simple. It's even posted on a little wooden post next to it.

Robotic slaves (Over ten thousand)

Laborers (Over five thousand)

Peasants (Around two hundred)

Women and children (Around fifty)

Members of the royal court (None)

Royalty (None)

Jay has always been a good little boy. Never breaks any laws, is always polite and kind to everyone, and is even one of the few people in Ninjago who acknowledges that slaves are people too, not just machines built for slavery. Though sadly, as time progresses, these beliefs lower and lower. From Jay's history lessons, robots hadn't always been created to serve people. No, they were created to increase the population a little bit more. It's a completely different story nowadays.

He's never wanted to go on that stage. He's witnessed what happens there. Though he knows he's going to die eventually, it's not something he wanted to do this young. Well, no one wants to be nude while having their head chopped off in front of the entire village.

Everyone who lives in the village despises walking past the execution block. The surface of the wood is covered in purple blood and tears, the perfect warning for those who attempt to go against the rules. Steal an apple? Your blood will be on those wooden planks soon enough.

He looks at the schedule attached to a post next to execution block. Every time someone is caught breaking the law, a laborer is in charge of updating the schedule. According to the time, a criminal will be 'brought to justice' in around twenty minutes or so. Though he's never enjoyed watching them, he may as well stick around. Maybe, just maybe, they've caught the man who hung his parents.

He shakes his head. It's been four years; he really needs to get over it. After all, it's not like it had been bloody. His parents just didn't do what the gang wanted. They didn't make the invention, whatever it was, they wanted to badly. When they refused… they were killed.

He sits down next to the post, and yawns.

-Twenty minutes later-

Jay is snapped awake by a kick in the face.

"Damn it…" He mutters, cursing himself for his stupidity. Everyone knows that falling asleep in this neighborhood isn't a good idea. People get murdered, raped, beaten… who knows?

"Get up, scum. The execution is about to start." The man responsible says, holding out his hand. Jay takes it, but the man laughs and throws Jay back into the ground again, and laughs. "Wow, you do trust too eaily. Rumors are true sometimes, aren't they?"

"There are rumors about me?" he asks, standing up on his own.

"You're Jay, right?"

He nods.

"Yeah, well people have been talking about how you're making some emotionless robot. Apparently you trusted one of your few customers with this bit of information, and man, did it spread like wildfire. I can tell you personally, that if you finish that thing, people will be bidding into the millions." He says, and pats Jay on the back. "Just try to get it done."

"I don't know if I can finish it… I don't even know how robots work."

The man laughs. "Just take one apart. They don't cost too much these days, so you should be able to get one for a cheap thirty dollars."

They walk into the crowd, turn around, and face the block, where a man stands, sharpening a large axe. On the stairs, guarded by a man with a sword to its back, stands a robot.

Head down, hair covering its face and naked, Jay wouldn't have been able to tell who it was until he saw the small lightning-shaped tattoo he had given him when he first got him.

It was his one and only robot. The one he had excused from work earlier.

"Uh, excuse me, but what is it being executed for?" Jay asks, feeling guilty for saying 'it'.

The executioner holds up a piece of paper, one he always gets which states why the victim would be decapitated. If the executioner does not approve, he may have a say in it. "It says here that it was wandering through the streets, no collar, owner, or anything with it. You should know that's against the law for robots."

"But, it was mine, and I let him take the day off!" Jay exclaims, earning a gasp or two from the audience.

"How do we know you're not just trying to save it? I've met a man or two like you who want to free the robots." The executioner replies, narrowing his eyes. "No one refers to their robot with a gender."

"He's mine, I promise. Look, you see that lightning bolt tattoo on his ankle? I was the one who tattooed it on him! I have the same one on my arm too!" Jay says, lifting up his right sleeve to show the exact copy of the tattoo on his robot's ankle on his wrist.

"Why did you let it go? And treat your superiors with respect!" He spits. Jay forgot in the heat of the moment. He shakes his head. A rule so simple…yet a rule so easily forgotten.

He goes on his knees, something everyone hates doing. The action was only invented to cause the individual to lose pride. To show their place in society. Let them know that no matter how rich they got, no matter how confident they got, they would never be good enough. Just like everyone else, this is exactly how Jay feels.

"I let him go because I had no use for him today. He's never broken a rule, ever. I've never found the need for a collar, personally. I've never tied him up before, or put him on a leash." He replies, and quickly adds, "Sir."

The crowd gives him disgusted looks, and Jay realizes quickly that what he had been allowing his slave to do was against the law. He could be killed for thinking robots to be equal. It's a dangerous world, and keeping secrets was a large part of staying alive.

"Too late." The executioner replies, and throws the robot onto the block. For a moment, Jay's eyes hold his. Full of fear, sorrow… and rage.

The robot had always been a little rebellious, insulting Jay whenever he got the chance. Unlike most owners, who would kill their slave instantly, Jay understood how he felt. If anyone tried to tell him whom to obey, especially if they beat him daily –something he never did- he would be mad himself.

In a final act of rebellion, the robot rolls off the block, and kicks the executioner. Being robotic, they were created to have immense strength- something the robot put into his kick.

The execution is sent stumbling backwards, and the robot stands up, shooting a pleading look at Jay. Perhaps he believed that Jay was a good guy in this world. His last shard of hope.

Jay, however, is powerless in this situation, and he knows it. "I-" he begins, but doesn't finish.

"_Please!" _

The executioner whips around, axe in full swing, and decapitates the robot in a swift movement. The robot falls to the floor, headless, blood

gushing out of its neck. Blue blood, dripping through the cracks, some spilling onto the floor, soaking Jay's boots.

The executioner looks at the crowd, whom are cheering all around Jay. Another death to those they hate. "Everyone go home, I'll have the laborers clean this up," he says, and narrows his eyes at Jay. "You stay here."

He can't help but gulp. He's an inventor. He had lived a simple life. Went to public school, got a job after graduation, never had a bad encounter with the police, and now he's going to get in trouble with someone higher than him on the list. All because he did what he believed was right.

But sometimes it's better to keep quiet, isn't it?

-Walker Inventions, Jamanakai Village-

Jay grips the table, struggling to keep himself up. Being publicly tortured is never fun. Well, he had just assumed at first. Now he _knows. _

His entire body aches. He had been chained to two poles by the wrists, high enough to make him rest on his knees. He had been stripped of his shirt, punched, kicked, whipped, cut, and various other torture methods had been used on him. The worst had been when a knife was placed and pressurized on top of his right eye- something that would leave a scar.

He topples over, and groans when he hits the floor. In an attempt to stand up again, he grabs the corner of the table, but only grabs paper on top of it, his hand slipping and bringing the paper down with it. He looks at what he brought down. A letter, with the royal seal on it- something important.

He opens it; reading it only with his left eye, due to lack of vision in his right one.

Dear Walker household,

_With the war against the tyrannical Dark Island approaching, we wish to have as many soldiers as possible. We only have one requirement. _

1: Must be a male of over fourteen years of age.

_You may select any member living in your home, as the caste system __will not__ matter, except for the women and children. _

Your loving king,

Pythor.

Jay re-reads it a few times, soaking in the information. No other men in the household, and he's over fourteen…

"I guess that would be me."

**I am extremely sorry for the long update, including that the chapter was slightly boring itself. I do hope you continue reading, as I can promise the next one will have angst, as well as be introducing a new rank: Laborers. **

Notes: Jay will not go blind, and Pythor is human. I will show his design when I write about him in person.

**I do hope you review, and enjoyed this chapter. **

~Emily

3. Chapter 3

I will now present Cole, followed by Kai and Nya. I do hope you enjoy this chapter.

**PS: Most of the laborers (save for Cole, which is explained later) have bad grammar and vocabulary. They're not errors. **

**SWEAR ALERT:**** This chapter contains swearing. Hide your computer from nosey parents, siblings, and friends.**

**I'm serious guys. This chapter has a lot of swearing, but it helps develop Cole's character. So it's necessary. If you don't approve, please ignore it. Replace it with words like "fudge" and "bad"! **

**Damn I sounded like John Egbert for a second there. **

**THIS CHAPTER HAS SEXUAL HARASSMENT! It's not large, though. So do not find the need to skip the scene. Like there's no sex scene or anything. **

**Thank you. **

-Caves of Despair, Ninjago-

The situation was inescapable. Well, in most minds. In Cole's, anyone could do it. But he had been born like this. His partners and friends, who care for him a great deal, had raised him to believe that he's wrong. But he's done with them.

His upbringing had been precarious. Rocks threatened to crumble every moment- most working were terrified constantly. This may still be the case today, but Cole is the only one that enjoys being underground. He feels comfort in being surrounded by rocks.

Too bad he wants to leave them so badly.

The only thing stopping him are the guards, and the huge dragon guarding the mines. He could remember when he first ran into it, around when he

was five. The dragon blends into the walls so well, that even now he can't see it. He had come face-to-face with the creature. It guards the exit, basically. He had been running happily, giggling a little, ignoring the screams and shouts behind him. When he reached it, however, the dragon had slithered right in front of him, narrowing its eyes and growling. The dragon had raised a claw; threatening to crush or slice him- he still doesn't know.

Had his guardians not rescued him, he would have been killed for sure. They had picked him up, thrown him over their shoulders like a sack of potatoes, and ran away, with Cole looking back at the dragon, fear in his young eyes.

He sighs. Ever since, the guards and other laborers had kept a close eye on him. They make sure he never leaves before he's allowed, never breaks any rules, and never disrespects his superiors.

He's not even sure of whether his name is a pun, or just a coincidence.

_Cole. _Or is it _Coal? _

He'll never know if he lives the life planned out for him. Work in the mines all day, and to only be let out late at night. The routine had been followed since he started, and will be followed until he finishes.

Not if he can help it. He'll escape the Caves of Despair, and the small village just outside of it. Once through the village, he'll enter the forest nearby, run for miles, and eventually stop, and rest on the ground in his newly found freedom. He can get a job, make money-

Right. He's never gone to school. Hell, he's one of the few who can speak English properly. Though he only learned from speaking it, and hearing it. He's glad to have it though. Because to everyone else, English is their second language.

Silence is their first.

He digs his pickaxe into the rock, splitting it in half. He's not even sure why he did it. He's supposed to be mining the ore, not the rocks. After all, with the war coming up, the demand for steel has increased by the millions. More laborers have been brought into the mines, and are forced to either smelt or mine.

With his strength, Cole's been chosen to be a miner. One who digs their pickaxe into the rocks thousands of times a day, with only a few cents a day.

He rests for a few moments. He understands that it's imperative to be on task, and that his nation's well being rests on his shoulders. But why in these conditions? Why is it so important that he's paid so little? Can't he just be paid like anybody else? Nobody wants to be in a lower social class because they were _born _into it. Just like most laborers, Cole understands how robots must feel. Their sole existence it seems is to serve and obey. Cole knows this is his, but he doesn't want it. He will

be something else. He'll earn his freedom. He'll become a citizen, a peasant. He'll be known for his immense strength, get a job working for the king himself, and eventually move up a status.

He shakes his head. One small step at a time. After all, you can't climb a ladder if you only look up. You must look at the rungs in front of you first, and get past those.

Cole feels steel slice across his back. Not meant to harm him, but a warning slice. He had broken a rule, not working constantly. But how is he supposed to? Work gets boring, and being bored is a large weakness to everyone. Minds should not be forced to concentrate on something it does not want to, or be concentrated on nothing, for long periods of time. It doesn't improve that way.

"You okay?"

Cole looks to his right, where another laborer stands, concern in his eyes. "I'm good. Thank you."

"Bandage at your house?"

Of course, by then everyone had become accustomed to caring for each other. They had all become one big family, making sure they were all safe, supporting each other, and everything a family does. If a laborer is starving, a family will take them in and feed them, most likely letting them rest there until they're ready to move on. Laborers are known for being good people.

He groans and rubs his forehead, drowsiness beginning to take its place like it always does around the end of the day. "Yes."

A couple of moments later, a loud bell rings through the caves, telling all who are there that the day is over. Just like everyone else, he drops his pickaxe on the ground, and heads towards the exit.

Another day of work done.

-Village of Despair, Ninjago-

Cole arrives home, stepping into his small house as quietly as possible. He closes the door, cringing when it creaks loudly.

"Cole, is that you?"

He winces. "Yeah…"

"Come into the kitchen, dear."

The voice is crystal clear, yet sharp like glass. Everything his wife says is in a tone of dominance- she has power over him. He is a laborer, after all. She's a rank above him. Women in power are often cruel, here. They grasp at the little power they have, and abuse it.

Obeying with reluctance, Cole enters the kitchen, where his wife, Elise, sits on the counter, legs crossed. She wears a white crop top, which shows her flat stomach, and a short black skirt. She's only a couple of years older than him, after all. She's twenty-one. He's nineteen.

"Yes?" he asks, thinking of excuses to leave. She had chosen him. He hadn't chosen her, meaning that she had found him one day, and forced him into marriage, like peasants would do with women. Most women go after members of the royal court, or peasants with lots of money. Not a plain, laborer like him. He can't even speak English properly.

"Come here."

He crosses his arms across his chest, staying put. "No."

"No? Now, you _do _remember your place, right?" She asks, picking up the wine glass next to her. The kitchen is something simple- wooden cabinets with marble countertops.

"Yes." he replies, eyes shining with defiance. He raises an eyebrow. Perhaps she'll leave him alone today.

"Then you know you must obey my every order."

"You know I'm not a slave, right? Sure, you're higher than me on this bullshit caste system, but I'm allowed to fight back. It's a law."

"Then I guess you'll just have to resist me."

She jumps off of the counter, and before Cole can react, she pins him to the fridge, a hungry look in her eyes. She looks at his simple black shirt for a moment, but rips it off, despite how much Cole tries to resist. She's become so good at it, that no matter how much Cole tries, he just can't seem to stop it. She smiles. Shirt first, pants second.

She lunges in for a kiss, knocking his head against the fridge. While she kisses him, her fingers trace the abs on his stomach, Cole's eyes wide open the entire time. He pushes her off with force, and steps back a little. "Do we have to do this? I just want a normal fucking night for once!" Cole exclaims, but receives a slap to the face. A hard one. It leaves a red mark on his face, but before he can do anything, she attacks him again, kissing with full force, her hands pushing him against the fridge by the shoulders.

Cole stops resisting for a few moments, and tries to enjoy the kiss, no matter how hard it is. She is his wife, after all. Though this is interrupted when her hands begins going lower than they should.

"Stop!" he shouts, pushing her off.

"What's wrong?" she asks, and is about to lunge again when Cole slides past her, taking a butcher knife off of the counter.

"I swear, I will use this!" he says, holding it up in defense.

"And what, get yourself killed after? You know you'll be killed if you stab me."

He keeps it held up, but inches past her, and when he's out of the kitchen, he sprints out of the house, and into the town. Maybe he can stay somewhere else tonight.

The dirt is muddy as always. It rains quite often, and the town frequently floods due to it. But it's not like its annoying or anything- flooding means that he gets a day off from the mines. Though he does have to avoid Elise in the house all day. He wouldn't dream of her finding his only hiding place. It's a small hatch in a closet, which leads into an attic she doesn't know about. It's perfect for hiding.

He blinks, and hears some distant shouting. He looks across the town, which is a general market, with a grocery store, blacksmith, and all the things a town needs. And, in the center, like with every town, lies an execution block. Though since this is almost a complete laborer town, the blood surrounding the block isn't purple. It's red.

Just outside the blacksmith shop, he can make out two kids, who look maybe around nine years old. In fact, he thinks he recognizes one of the young kids, whom happens to work in the mines with him.

He starts making his way towards them, hoping that perhaps he can stay with the kid that night. After all, he knows his father. They've been acquaintances for a while, and if he explained himself he's sure the man would let him stay with him.

"Ha! And just what are you going to do about it? You can't even speak English!"

Cole groans. Just what he needs- some peasant bullies. Oh, how he had to deal with those when he was younger.

"Yes, I speak!"

Cole rolls his eyes. This kid is just setting himself up for a beating. Though luckily for the little laborer, he has a big kid coming to help. He breaks into a sprint, but Cole's just about to reach them when the sees the peasant whips out a knife, lunges forward, and stabs the kid in the leg.

Instant crying is heard, and Cole tackles the peasant to the ground, taking the knife out of his hand and throwing it away. "Are you fucking retarded or something?!" he shouts, pinning the kid by his hands to the ground. "Had I not come, he would have died."

The peasant smirks. "You have good English for a laborer."

"You have shitty English for a peasant," he spits, eyes narrowing. He doesn't care if the kid is only nine or something. He doesn't care if the kid has power over him. No terrible deed goes unpunished.

"I could scream right now and they would kill you."

Cole's grip loosens for a moment, but tightens up quickly. "Do it, I fucking _dare _you."

On cue, the kid screams, but only gets a split second into it. Cole slams his hand onto his mouth, and finds himself smiling a little.

Gee, that doesn't happen often.

"Now how about you run your little ass home to your mommy, where you might actually be appreciated!"

He gets up, and runs over to the bleeding boy, picking him up. "It's okay, just tell me where you live. I'll bring you home."

Cole takes a good look at the boy. He hadn't seen the knife properly- the boy had been stabbed in the stomach, and seems to have bled to death.

He lays the boy on the ground lightly, hiding his emotions, and whips around to face the boy who stabbed him. The peasant is gone, along with the knife. "Damn it…"

With regret, he begins trekking back to his house. He'll just have to stay in the attic again.

…

Unfortunately, the moment he walks in, his wife appears in front of him. She must have been waiting in the window, like she always does. It's kind of creepy.

"Hello, Cole. Where'd you go?" She asks, her voice bearing a happy tone for reasons Cole doesn't know why.

"I'll tell you when you tell me why you're so fucking happy."

She giggles, but frowns after a moment. "You know I don't allow that language in my house."

"_Your _house?"

"Yes, _my _house. I'm the one in it all the time, aren't I?"

"Yeah but I don't _want _to be in it. Ever."

"Cole, go upstairs to the bedroom."

Knowing what's coming, he begins to open the front door, but only to have it slammed shut by Elise.

"Go up to the bedroom," she says, this time with a high level of authority in her voice. Cole can't help but notice the baseball bat placed conveniently placed behind her, and groans.

With reluctance, he begins going up the staircase, Elise following right behind him.

It's going to be a tough night.

-Caves of Despair, Ninjago-

"All right, everybody _shut the fuck up_ for once and listen!" The head guard of the mines yells, causing all the laborers in the section to turn around and face him. "Okay, you're the last mining section, so I need one of you to volunteer for this war. So anybody interested in dying on the battle field, because you're fucking worthless?"

It's dead silent. Cole looks around, baffled. He had expected everyone's hands to raise at once, or thousands of voices being called out.

_If I leave, I won't have to deal with queen bitch at home, but I'll also have to fight in some bullshit war… _He thinks, and the memories of the night before come back to him. _Fuck this I'm leaving. _

His hand raises, and the guard looks at him, raising an eyebrow. "Okay, it's your choice…" He motions to the guards next to him. "Okay, bring him and the others down to the station. They'll be shipped off tomorrow."

Cole looks towards the sunlight at the exit, and smiles.

He's finally escaping.

So I would like to point out that the scene where he came home and went upstairs **_was **_**rape. Yes, women can be rapists too. Gender equality right there! Woo!**

Sorry if the writing seemed bad, it's late at night and I just got back from camping. I'm tired as hell.

Okay, so please review! I'll be introducing Kai and Nya next, and after that, they all get to meet each other, and **_damn, **_**I am excited. I have five pages of notes for after these chapters. I swear. **

Well, hope you liked it!

**~Emily **

4. Chapter 4

**Gee, I'm so excited to get these introductions over with. Like I said before, I have a ton of pages of notes on how they act around each other, and what happens in the story. **

**Right. Back on topic. **

**Since there are two people I'm introducing, this chapter may be a little longer than the others. I honestly don't know I write these before writing the chapter. **

**Time to introduce our siblings, who love each other in a completely platonic way! (I'm being serious. No incest. I just had to make that reference). **

**-Ignacia Village, Ninjago- **

"Have you ever considered killing yourself? It's a viable option for our society."

The customer looks insulted, but Kai smirks. The man had walked into his shop, thrown a sword on the counter, claiming that it was 'poor quality'.

Lies.

His swords are the best around.

"Are you always so rude to your customers?" The man asks, and Kai puts his legs on the counter, leaning back on his chair.

"I honestly couldn't care less if you liked your purchase or not. Either you're happy or you're not. It doesn't affect me. Because guess what? If you took me to court, or whatever the hell it's called, guess who would win? Take a guess, why don't you? Royal blacksmith versus peasant. Gee, it's so hard to guess!" He exclaims, throwing his hands up into the air. "Seriously, if you're just here to complain, get out of my shop. Your appearance is seriously scaring away my customers."

The customer grabs the sword, which has a large dent in it. Hey, it's not Kai's fault the guy was careless with it. That sword had been in good shape when he sold it. "You know what? If anybody wants to know if you give good business, I'll put in a bad word for you."

"Dude, you broke the sword while you were, what is it… live action role playing? You're a total loser. Nobody's going to give a shit about what you think." Kai replies, folding his arms across his chest. This guy is a total dweeb. He's sure of it.

"Fuck you, and good bye!" The customer exclaims, storming out of the shop. In response, Kai begins laughing.

"Love you too!" He shouts, laughing at himself. Just another day for him. Making fun of customers, occasionally talking to Nya, his younger sister, and filling out an order or two. Typical stuff for someone the second highest on the list. Yep, he's a member of the royal court. Higher than all of you. And that's just the way he likes it.

He looks at the robot near the entrance, and narrows his eyes. It should be doing something. He doesn't know what, but _something. _

"Hey you, inferior!" He says, causing the robot to turn to face him. The robot seems to look at Kai's feet, not looking into his eyes like he was told to. "Shouldn't you be working or something?"

The robot's eyes go wide open. "Y-yes, but-"

"Uh uh uh, that's not how it works around here," he says, shaking a finger. He begins glaring. "Find something to do or I will _not _hesitate to kill you."

The room suddenly gets serious, and the robot nods hurriedly, and begins glancing in all directions. It can't seem to find anything, and look down at his feet. "I'm so sorry, master. I would have sworn-"

A blade entering the robot's chest cuts it off, Kai shaking his head while is drops to the ground. He really shouldn't be killing so many. It's not his fault they're so worthless. They deserve to die at times. He smiles to himself. That's a perfect reason.

"How many times have I told you to _not _to kill the robots?"

Kai looks at the staircase in the blacksmith shop, where his sister descends the staircase. She wears a long sleeve red shirt, with long red pants. Something illegal for women.

"Nya, he wasn't doing as I told him to. Also, aren't you not allowed to wear that?" He asks, raising an eyebrow. "Go change."

Nya rolls her eyes, crossing her arms. "Do I ever do what you say, mister _High and Mighty?_"

"If you want to die, that's fine by me. Just try to do it in a graceful fashion." He replies, and smiles. "I guess if you wanted to live, you could do what I say and wear something appropriate."

She laughs. "Because what I'm wearing totally doesn't cover everything, right? What is it with men and their strange fetish of seeing women in showy clothes?"

"Hey, it's not me. I'm just trying to protect you." He says, taking down his legs and stands up.

"You're not protecting me. You're protecting your pride. After all, I'm sure a younger sister who's not afraid to take a stand is _terrible _for your reputation."

She's always been rebellious, and a little snappy. Kai loves her no matter what, but he's worried for her. She could get herself killed. It's so easily done, and he doesn't want to be in the crowd to watch. To watch his sister's head roll off the stage, lifeless and bleeding.

Their father died when they were younger, their mother having disappeared after their birth, and Kai's raised Nya all on his own. He learned how to

act from the other residents. How to treat those superior to him, and how to treat those below him. He just wanted Nya to blend in, and never stand out too much. He had been raised with the caste, and had learned to believe in it. After all, it only made sense to him. Why shouldn't those born or created to serve be lower than him?

However, his sister didn't like it so much. He tried to get her to blend in, to do what she was expected to do, yet it didn't work. She did the opposite of what she was told, breaking just about every rule that was set for her gender in under three months. Where had he gone wrong? Should he not have been so strict? He didn't know how to raise her from there. He was only nine.

"No, it's not bad for my reputation, I just don't understand why you can't blend in. Just act _normal _for once, damn it!"

"I was perfectly fine until I was fourteen. Yeah, I was a child, so I had the right to be treated like one. But why didn't the laws change for me? _You're _laws changed so much- you have so many rights, and I'm restricted like a six year-old. Do you not understand this? You turned fourteen, and you just bloomed, because you're second highest on the list. Yet I turn of age, and guess what? Everything's the damn same."

"Suck it up." He replies, causing Nya to groan in frustration and storm out of the shop. _Ugh. Now I need to go find her or some shit-_

There's a knocking at the door, interrupting his thinking. "Yes?" he calls, raising an eyebrow.

A man enters, letter in hand. "There's a letter from the castle for you, sir. It's of high importance."

Kai strides over to the man, head held high as always. "Give it to me." He says, and reaches out his hand, taking the letter.

He opens it and reads it.

Kai,

_I am speaking in Pythor's name when he asks that you aid us with our upcoming war. We are asking each blacksmith to complete an order of the weapon they specialize in, yours being swords. You do not need to worry about the other types of weapons. Others are creating those. _

_We ask you for an order of around six hundred swords. _

_I do understand it's a large order to fulfill, but I do hope you try your best. If you have any complications, please do write back. If you are unable, or find it too hard on your own, find some help. I do believe your sister is trained in the art of a blacksmith, is she not? (Don't worry; no one will have to know. This can be a secret between us.) _

_As previously mentioned, do not hesitate to contact me if you have any issues. I hope this order can be completed as soon as possible! _

(And don't think about making bad quality swords. That will not do. We have soldiers fighting for their lives.)

The royal advisor,

_Slithraa. _

He smiles. He's friends with Slithraa, Pythor's royal advisor. Hey, now that he has permission, Nya might actually be able to help! After all, after her huge rant today, he's sure this will make her happy.

Now he just needs to find her.

-Nya, Ignacia Village, Ninjago-

Nya frowns. Her fingertips touch the edge of her boot, and she's unsure of what to do. Inside of her combat boot she hides a blade, which is in the shape of an 'S', making it big enough to stab someone through their chest, yet small enough to hide. Completely and utterly perfect.

She's so glad she made it.

"Come on, princess. Just a kiss,"

"It's nine in the morning and you're drunk. This is pathetic." She replies, and sticks her hand inside the boot, gripping the handle of the blade. Caution is always necessary.

She doesn't know the man, yet he's in an obvious drunken state. His shirt has vomit on it, probably most of it being alcohol, and he's having trouble standing up. "But I love you."

"I don't even know you."

He takes another step, and Nya narrows her eyes. Another step and she slits his throat. No one's around, as they're in an alley, but she still knows that once she kills him, she needs to get out of there. She always keeps her 'S' blades on the attackers she kills, giving her the nickname 'The Samurai'. Nobody knows it's her, and everyone thinks it's a man. Perfect both ways. Nobody would even consider that she's the killer.

Hey- she's no savage. She just kills those who attempt to attack, rape, or do whatever to her. She very high on her pride. Though it's too bad men want a challenge. Due to her short haircut, and her wardrobe, she's attacking more often. Most women wear clothing that barely cover themselves- something Nya doesn't plan on wearing. Ever.

"I dare you to take another step."

Him, not realizing the potential threat, does.

Nya lunges, whipping the blade out of her boot. She kicks him in the stomach, which causes the man to fall to the ground due to his poor

balance. She goes on the ground, kneeling over him, a slight grin on her face. Hand on blade; she slides it slowly across his neck, trying to draw as much blood as possible. The bloodier the death the more attention it brings, right?

When the man is dead, she places the blade next to him, and takes any money she finds on him. Due to the law, she's not allowed to have any of the money Kai owns. Since she doesn't want some husband, and absolutely refuses prostitution, she took this as a living. Though she has a code: Only kill in self-defense. No killing for no reason.

And living in general requires a lot of self-defense, in her eyes. She doesn't care if it's against the law for her to attack or defend herself against those higher than her. She will defend herself, no matter the cost. Because they will see the flaws in this system.

They will see the hell they have created.

Of course, by 'they', she means the government. _They _were the ones who created this world. Of enslavement, harsh punishment, and inequality.

Basically everything wrong in the world put into one nation.

Though not to forget their king, Pythor. Sure, the laws were created before he was even born; yet he chose to enforce them. He could have wiped them out, started out fresh, yet once he become their king he didn't change a thing. In fact, he made it _harder _to live. The laws piled up, and became so strict that no one dares break a rule.

Well she just learned all of this from her history teacher. Women were allowed to go to school, yet once they finished their education they weren't allowed to have a job. They were required to find a man, get married, have children, and teach them the ways of the world. She can understand how painful it must be for some of them. To raise their child from birth, just to see him turn into one of _them. _

Putting the money into her pocket, she exits the alley, blood on her hands.

-Kai, Ignacia Village, Ninjago-

The village had changed from when he was younger. It had changed from a tiny, farming village to small town. In fact, most don't realize, but pretty much all of the food shipments come from this town. Guess you could say he's proud.

He walks through the streets, sword in the sheathe on his belt. While he walks, however, nearly every person he passes dives on their knees, causing him to smile. He is superior to them, after all. They have every right to dive on their knees. In fact, it's good if they scrape their knees on the ground. It'll remind them later on of their place.

The laborers work in the fields, growing the crops. The citizens keep the place alive, making sure there's always something going on. For him, a

member of the royal court, he just lounges around all day, making a sword or two. Though now with his newly found order, his schedule is about to change.

Over the large crowd, he spots the only woman in sight wearing pants. Of course it's his sister. Who else would it be?

"Nya!" he yells, catching her attention. "Come, I need to tell you something!"

She strides over to him, prouder than she should be. She walks like him, sometimes talks like him, and generally acts like she has authority over those she doesn't. She's her own person. She refuses to just be regarded as a 'woman'. No, she wants to be regarded as Nya. A fifteen year-old girl who you just can't control.

"Can I help you?" she asks, raising an eyebrow.

Heads turn.

"Well, that's kind of what I was asking. I got this _huge_ order, and you're allowed to help me with it! We'll even get to split the money this time! You can even quit whatever job you have now or whatever." He says. Whenever he asks Nya how she gets her money, she never replies with a straight up answer. She dances her way around the subject, and changes it rather quickly.

She crosses her arms, and looks around. Kai knows she's going to act out. And it's all because she's in public. "Why should I help? I've never been allowed to help before."

He feels a low growl rise in his throat. Had this not been his sister, she would have been dead by now. No one's allowed to speak to him that way. Especially not in public. "Nya, I have to make six hundred swords for this war. But if you don't want to help, I can just hire someone else…"

"Then do it."

"Nya…" He begins, but shakes his head. "Can we do this inside?"

"Fine."

**-Four Weapons, Ignacia- **

"Look, I thought you would be excited. You're always talking about how you want to work with me, and now you get the chance!"

Sure, he's not so he on this gender equality thing, but if he and Nya get to work together, why not?

"Because it's not permanent. It's for something you had to be given _permission _to have me help with. It's irritating because once this is done, our brother and sister bonding will be done, my little blacksmith

career will be over, and I'll have to go back to my old life. The one I live in right now. The one I hate with a burning passion."

"Just, I don't know, keep on working here. Nobody has to know."

Her face lightens up. "You'd do that… for me?!"

He smiles. "Well of course, you're my sister. Why wouldn't I?"

Nya bites her tongue, keeping her insults to herself. Instead, she hugs him, embracing the moment. "But what if they find out?"

"Don't worry, they won't."

-That night, Four Weapons, Ignacia-

Kai is awoken by a scream- muffled, frantic, but recognizable.

Nya.

He jumps out of bed, and scrambles downstairs, grabbing his sword. He throws on some armor quickly, and runs out of Four Weapons, to see her in a bag thrown over a man's shoulder. No, not just one, several.

The men all wear armor that looks like it's made of bones itself, and make them look like skeletons. They pause when they see Kai. "This is none of your business." One says, and Kai smirks.

"That's my sister, of course it's my business." He says, leaning on his sword.

"No it's not."

Before Kai can do anything, one with four arms throws four daggers at him. He rolls out of the way, but barely makes it. _Barely. _One clipped his left shoulder.

While he's on the ground, bleeding, the skeleton-like men make their getaway, entering the forest just behind Ignacia.

However, when Kai gets up, he doesn't chase after them. He knows who they are. With a 'G' printed on the back of their armor, it couldn't be more obvious.

Lord Garmadon, ruler of the Dark Island, sent them to kidnap his sister. He's not sure why, but he knows one thing: he's going to rescue her.

He enters Four Weapons, and grabs a piece of paper and a pencil.

_Slithraa, _

_Sorry, but I won't be able to fill in this order. _

Why?

_Because I'm joining the army. _

_They kidnapped my sister. They're going to pay. _

Sign me up,

Kai.

**Why do I suck so much at battle scenes? Ugh. **

**Okay, so introductions are OVER. I am so happy, we finally get to MOVE ON. Okay, sorry for that slight rant. Holy shit that chapter was 9 pages. On Word, of course. **

LARPING is not loser-y. In fact, next weekend I'm doing it with my friends while laser tagging.

Okay maybe it is.

So, like always, please review! They make my day everytime I get one.

~Emily

5. Chapter 5-1

Who's excited? I am! But then again, when am I **_never **_**excited to write? **

**Oh yeah, this isn't yaoi, which I think I've cleared up. **

**ATTENTION: This chapter will be separated in two chapters. It is much longer than the preludes, though I only expect maybe a few more chapters to be this length. **

Finally, let the story begin!

-Forest of Tranquility, Ninjago-

He stands in the middle of the camp, people swarming around him. His anxiety grew with every second, and he can't help but want to just crawl in a ball on the ground. But if he does that, he's bound to be beaten, right?

He feels his knees buckle, but of course nobody bothers to help him. Why should they? He's just a robot. As far as he's concerned, he's not even worthy of their space. Hell, people so far have made it pretty clear that he's better off dead.

That he's a waste of air.

Why had no one beaten him yet? Or attacked him, or killed him? Why were they just completely ignoring him? It makes no sense. He's vulnerable,

defenseless, and surrounded by the various classes. They should be jumping at the chance to hurt him, to kill him, _something. _It just doesn't feel right.

"_Attention all soldiers: I hope you have come to the conclusion that all here are not the only we have. The soldiers have been divided in two- one here, and another in a site just off of Ignacia. However, this is only the beginning. A trainer will pick two from here, and two from the other camp. He will then train the four of you, and you will all most likely bond. I do not recommend it. Though I am positive we will win this war, there's no guarantee that you'll all live._

_Please join us in the meal tent, as lunch will be served soon. Oh, and one more thing. From now on, the caste system is nonexistent. All of you are soldiers. A robot is now as valuable as a member of the royal court. Vice versa. After lunch you will be selected, and then brought to the other camp to meet your two comrades. If you have any questions, ask a guard nearby, or ask a fellow soldier. We do wish that even though you're heading off to war, you are not confused by any of this. _

For Ninjago!"

The announcement ends, which is in fact played once a day, though the small part at the end was new. This leaves Zane to look around. This is exactly why he wasn't beaten yet- they're not allowed. Though technically he's now free, that doesn't mean segregation doesn't exist. He just hopes his little troop won't hate him for what he is, like most at the camp seem to.

The camp is in a large clearing, littered by several tents. In the middle, however, lies the meal tent, where Zane has eaten for the past two days. The tent is also for socializing, he believes, yet he's tried to seclude himself as much as possible. It just doesn't seem _natural, _talking to peasants like they're equal. Because even though they are now, he knows in their minds he's not. He knows that if he survives, he'll go back to his old life as a slave. He'll go back to serving those he may have considered friends at a point- and they'll be as ruthless as ever.

He follows the crowd into the tent, lining up in the long line. He inwardly groans. Does he really need to eat every meal? He's gone weeks without food. He doesn't need pitiful _lunch. _

He steps out of line, choosing to leave the meal tent and enter his own at the other end up camp.

However, he bumps into a man at the exit.

"Fuck, I'm sorry. Here, pass." The man says, stepping aside.

"Thank you." He says quietly, and is about to leave when a rough hand is placed on his shoulder.

"Wait, are you not eating? You need to eat. Important stuff, you know?"

The man is considerably taller than him, as Zane only reaches up to his shoulders. It's slightly degrading, even though he's sure the man isn't doing it in that sense. "No, I am okay. I am not hungry."

The black-haired man snorts. "Bullshit. Now, Shorty, tell me your name. I think this is how us humans are supposed to interact, right?"

"Z-Zane," he replies, shocked. This man has referred to him as human- something he thought would never happen in his life. "What is your name?"

"My name's Cole. See, now that we have introductions, we can hang out a little. This means eating some shit, okay? Enjoy your freedom while it lasts. Because it'll be over soon."

Zane comes to the conclusion that Cole doesn't plan on living. Perhaps it was his wish to die, or he doesn't wish to return to his old life…

If they become friends, which he doesn't want to, he'll interrogate him on the subject. Wait. No, he shouldn't care. He just met Cole. He should just stay as far away as possible, as Cole looks very… strong. He doesn't want his face to be crushed in, or to have bones broken, or any of that…

"I am sure that one meal will not have an effect on whether or not I 'enjoy' my freedom. I am designed to survive weeks without a single crumb. I am perfectly capable of not eating a simple lunch."

"I know, but when you're given food, you take it. I'm sure that when your troop is out in the wilderness, you're all going to be starving. And you'll just wish that you had taken the fucking food." Cole replies, and pushes Zane inside the tent. "So eat the damn food."

They get their food together, not talking in the line. They grab what they were given, a bagel and cream cheese, and sit down at and empty table in the corner of the tent. They sit across from each other, and don't bother speaking until a question begins to burn in Zane's mind, and eventually escapes from his lips. He's allowed to talk to him anyways, right? "What social class are you?"

Zane expects a backhand to the face, or a negative response, probably telling him to 'shut up' or something like that. But instead, Cole merely shrugs. "I'm a laborer. I would ask you, but the eyes kind of give it away. Must have sucked, didn't it?"

Zane is baffled. He hadn't expected sympathy, or any sort of pity. That's not supposed to happen. Not to him. "I-"

His throat just seems incapable of speaking for the moment. He's never been asked for how he feels, or if his life was hard, or if it 'sucked'. Most just didn't care, or they already knew.

"How about I tell you a little about my life, and then you'll feel more comfortable?"

He nods, and hears Cole swallow. "Well, you know, typical, laborer stuff. I worked in the mines since I was born, had a wife –no kids-, and just general laborer stuff."

Zane can read him pretty well. Cole had been hiding something. His voice cracked, and he seemed to rush through it. He's not telling everything, and he's not sure if it's a pride thing, or if he doesn't want to tell it to someone he just met. It's understandable.

It's his turn now.

Oh how he wished he could summarize everything in a simple sentence.

"I was created in a robot factory, and they taught me how to behave. I was put on sale in Ninjago City, bought, and sold around a few times before my old mistress decided to put me in the war."

Cole picks at his food, avoiding eye contact. "Well, that sucks."

Zane swallows, and attempts to keep up the conversation. "Were you drafted for the war, or what happened?" he asks, taking a bite into his bagel.

"I volunteered."

He nearly spits it out. "B-but, why would you do such a thing?"

Cole pauses for a moment, probably thinking. "I just wanted to leave my old life," he replies, before quickly adding, "Being a laborer isn't all that fucking fun, you know?"

Zane can't just swallow the fact that Cole's hiding something. Zane's not sure if he should press, or just lay off. It could have mixed results. Cole could get mad at him if he pressed, losing this acquaintanceship, or he could let it go, but then he knows Cole's keeping a secret from him. "Is this secret you are keeping from me a pride thing?" he blurts out, and slaps his hands over his mouth. "I-I am so sorry! Here, I will just leave!"

He gets up, and turns around, and is about to leave when Cole calls his name. "Look Zane, we just met. I know you're probably not so educated on human interaction, and hell, neither am I, but there are some things I'm just not so open about. Maybe if we were to become better friends, but that's not going to happen, so I don't think I'm going to tell you yet. Trust me, if it's the secret I think you're referring too, it's never going to leave my lips. So I'm just going to be harshly honest- never try again." He says, a rather intense look in his eyes. "Sit back down."

Zane does as he's told, the command causing him to wince. "What should we talk about?" he asks, trying to lighten the conversation. After all, if they become friends, he has something to hope for. He can hope that his friend would survive, that he would see him again after, and they could perhaps celebrate after- they wouldn't have to go back to their old lives, something Zane knows8 they both hate.

"Because I'm a _huge_ conversation specialist. Dude, you're probably the tenth new person I've talked to in my entire life."

At least you have the freedom to speak when you wish.

Zane nearly slaps himself. Did he really just think that? He's not supposed to think that. Sure, he's thought of being rebellious, but Cole hasn't done anything to him. Cole's the nicest person he's met so far, and though Zane doesn't think they'll have any other bonding when lunch is done, Zane might consider him as a friend already. Now he can say he has a friend to his troop members when he meets them. They won't think he's as pathetic and worthless as he really is.

"Oh," he says, and gives an obviously forced laugh. "That is nice, I would guess."

"You know, when you think, you kind of just stand there looking into nothingness for a few moments. It's a little weird."

Oh why had he taken so long to respond?

"I do not think you understand. Us robots are incapable of moving while thinking."

"Uh, _why?"_

Zane had come to the realization a few years ago, yet he's still baffled of how clever the humans are. All of those beatings, those death threats, those punishments… it was because they knew all along. He still blames himself for his stupidity.

"There is a rule for us. It says that we are not allowed to think; so when we do, our bodies stop functioning. It allows the owner to see that we are thinking easily."

He doesn't really like talking about the rules given to him. He's not sure why, but Zane knows that it's one of his insecurities. Talking about them takes him out of his comfort zone, with no explanation as to why.

"Well that sucks. You aren't allowed to _think? _Why the fuck would they design you to if you're not allowed?" Cole asks, and is about to ask another question when he can see Zane's discomfort. "Okay, I see that's not a fun topic for you. Let's move onto something else… I have an idea! Let's talk about cooking."

"The culinary arts?" Zane asks, a little surprised. He hadn't expected Cole to like cooking.

"Yeah, sure, whatever that means." Cole replies, shrugging his shoulders in a nonchalant fashion.

Zane can feel his face brighten up a little. For once he can _finally _talk about a subject he loves. Well, not loves, but does enjoy. For him,

cooking comes naturally. He's been cooking for people almost everyday of his life, and it used to be one of the few things he could ever look forward to.

Zane's eyes go wide at the mental revelation.

He's _happy._

"What is your favorite meal to cook? Mine is steak, with the tasty Ninjago steak spice!" He closes his eyes for a moment and remembers the fun of cooking it, and sneaking himself some when no one was looking. "I also love making salad. Do you know those salad spinners, where you pull on the handle and the bowl goes spinning around? Well if not you must try them right away! It just makes you want to jump in with it, and spin around in circles like the teacups at amusement parks!"

He continues his rant for a few more minutes, Cole laughing every once in awhile. When he's done, Cole is nearly crying from laughter. "Okay, remind me to make you rant again sometime. That shit was hilarious!"

While Cole is laughing, Zane hears the familiar _ding! _of the intercoms.

"_Attention: In ten minutes, everyone will be congregating outside, at the center of the camp. There, you will all perform in competitions to show off your skills, and after that, your trainers will pick you. I hope you didn't make any enemies, as you never know- you might be partnered with one. So finish lunch, get dressed, and do whatever. You have exactly ten minutes." _

Cole looks at Zane and raises an eyebrow. "I guess we should get going, then."

Zane looks at his feet. Why did the mood have to go from mirthful, to one full of dread in mere moments? How is it possible? Is it so impossible for a happy mood to stay? Or does life just hate happiness? So far it seems possible.

"I guess so," he replies blankly, sighing.

-Ten minutes later, training camp, Forest of Tranquility-

The soldiers stand in a semi-circle around the general, whom has a megaphone in his hand, and is standing on a platform in the field. He's been barking orders at the guards with his raspy, demanding voice the entire time, and it's beginning to scare Cole a little bit. He shakes his head. He's not scared of anything.

Except dragons.

But that's one of his little secrets.

"Listen up!" The general yells, the megaphone making his voice so much louder. "We will be doing three tests. The first will be strategy. And guess how we're doing that?"

The tension in the air changes from fear to hopefulness. Cole thinks he knows which game they're going to play.

"Yes, for all of you excited soldiers, we're playing capture the flag." The general says, and gives a rusty laugh. "You'll be divided into two teams. I'm going to pick two leaders. So, raise your hand if you want to be one!"

Cole is nearly hit in the face as hands all around him shoot up into the air as if they're reaching for the stars. He looks to his left, and shares a pitiful look with Zane. Even if they wanted to, they wouldn't be picked. They're in the very back of the crowd. So neither put their hand up.

The general scans over the crowd, Cole guessing he's looking for a good leader-looking guy. Though the general looks at Cole dead in the eye, causing Cole to narrow his. If this is an attempt to scare him, it's not going to work.

The general points at him. "You."

His expression doesn't falter. "Me?"

"Yes, you. Now get up here."

"I didn't even raise my hand," Cole comments, a little louder than expected. The general heard him through the silence, and is laughing.

"Because those who don't want to lead make the best leaders."

Cole smiles. "Trust me, by the end of the day, that'll be proven wrong."

While the general chooses another leader, Cole looks over the crowd, mentally picking out whom he's going to choose. Robots. Every single one of them. Why? Because, they're able to move silently- Cole knows for a fact. When he was walking with Zane, he was silent like a hawk in flight.

The other leader is what Cole can tell is a peasant. Each race is so easy to differentiate. The robots have glowing blue irises, the laborers have a huge body build, the peasants look average, and the members of the royal court tend to have muscles as well.

"Alright boys, pick your teams."

Cole goes first. He looks over the crowd, and sees the face he was looking for. Zane. "You."

The other leader goes, and picks a laborer. Cole saw that one coming.

It seems to go in the same fashion- Cole picking all of the robots and peasants, while the other leader, Scott, picks all of the big ones. Sure, the big ones will aid in combat, but Cole wants the stealth part of it.

The nimble ones are sure to blend in easily, while the big ones stand out. It's an obvious choice, yet Scott didn't seem to take it.

The general laughs again. "Let's play capture the flag."

**Okay, did I honestly kind of make it earlier than usual? Damn. **

So I guess there's not much to say. Please review, as it is always appreciated. I love you all so much!

~Emily

6. Chapter 5-2

**I feel like this chapter is going to be fun to write. I'm serious. Oh, and Kai and Jay go through the same thing, though I'm not putting much detail into theirs. But let's not focus on that right now. **

**I think this chapter might be completely about Cole. Maybe some parts about Zane, but don't count on it. Most of the last chapter was through his perspective! Like I said before, this could be inaccurate. I write these before the chapter. **

**This chapter contains some gore. Just letting you know in advance. **

I hope you like it!

-Forest of Tranquility, Ninjago-

"And why should we listen to anything you say?" a peasant asks, folding his arms. "You'll just throw the game for us."

"What makes you think that?" Cole snaps back, whipping his head around to face the man.

"First off, you picked all of the weak players. Second, you're a laborer. We all know you're incapable."

"I am capable of snapping your neck."

The man opens his mouth to speak, but closes it when Cole takes a threatening step forward.

The team is in the middle of the forest, flag in place, and choosing their game plan. He's tried explaining that he chose them for a reason, the reason being that they could easily outrun and sneak around the other team, yet some still want to charge head on. Is it that hard to accept the fact that they're so small?

"Why don't you go on the other team, since you're so big?" another asks.

"I'm the captain of this team. I have no choice. So either you suck up your fucking pride, or you take your leave."

"And why-"

Cole interrupts him. He's sick of this. "I'm not taking any of your caste bullshit any longer. They said it doesn't exist anymore. Now, I know you probably still believe that I'm lower than you, but I'm damn sure that I'm stronger. Because guess what? In a war, it's the strong ones that win. If you don't see everyone as equal, you're going to have a hard time for the next portion of your life.

"Basically, shut the fuck up." Cole says. "Anyone else have comments?"

The rest of the team is silent, and Cole gives off the slightest smile. He explains to them his plan, which is to have the robots go by trees, while the peasants go on foot. If they attack first, the other team will be so focused on the peasants on the ground, that they won't notice the silent robots in the trees. The forest is known for its tall trees, with the branches going past the skyline.

Cole looks down at his feet, where a large bag lies. The general had given it to him. He had been told to only hand it out when they were ready, which he assumes is now. The general had also told him he had an hour to prepare, after all. He looks inside the bag and chuckles.

The bag is filled to the brim with crossbows and arrows. The arrows, however, are completely real.

It's a death match.

"So, uh…" Cole says, raising his head from the bag. He looks at his team. "It's capture the flag to the death."

"Wait are you serious?" a peasant asks, shoving Cole aside to look inside the bag. The peasant gulps. "He is."

"Are we still going with the plan?" another asks, voice wavering.

Cole nods. "Stay in groups. Peasants, rather than running head-on, try to sneak in. If one of you can grab a flag and get out of there without using robots, that would be great." The peasants nod, choosing to follow his instructions now that they know the deadly situation. "Robots, you stick to the original plan. Though I need you to assassinate any members of the other team that you see. If a peasant is in combat, aid him. It's important that we all help each other. If you see them being snuck on, kill the one sneaking up on him. Help each other at all costs, even if you don't like each other. Life is more important than a little ranking rivalry.

"I think that's all there is to say. Take your crossbow and arrows, and position yourself wherever you'd like." Cole says, and everyone seems to move at once, except for one figure. Zane. He's frozen in fear, is looking at his feet, and seems to be on the verge of tears. Cole takes a long step over to him, and kneels down. "You okay?"

"We are on the precipice of death." Zane answers rather darkly. Cole is a little bewildered that Zane could act like this.

"Just do your part and everything should be fine." Cole reassures, though feels like it was a little empty. "Look, I'm not good at this whole comforting thing, but trust me- you'll survive."

"There is no way to be certain of this. Cole, excuse my inappropriate question, but are you sure this whole thing is a good idea? Us robots are unclear in the art if stealth, yet you put so much faith into us." Zane replies, still looking at the ground.

"I only do what I believe is best. You robots, you're able to move without making a single sound. You've been trained to not make a sound at pain, to be silent at all times, and that's caused you to not make a sound while moving. I'm _sure _you can move through the trees."

Cole's able to see the minor discomfort on Zane's face. Whenever he brings up something to do with the rules, Zane either changes the subject, or answers with a single word. It's one if his weak spots.

"Is it alright if I remain here and protect the flag? I am afraid that they will form a phalanx and we will be unable to defeat them. I then would be able to hide and shoot whomever endeavors to retrieve the flag."

Cole sighs in defeat. "Sure, I don't see why not." He pauses. "What the fuck does phalanx mean?"

In the moment, Zane seems to turn into a dictionary. "A body of troops or police officers, standing or moving in close formation. An example: Six hundred marchers set off, led by a phalanx of police."

"So, kind of like a, what is it…?" Cole taps his chin, attempting to remember the word. "Blockade! When the guards or whatever stand in a huge crowd to stop something? Like a prison break, or a chase, or something?"

"That is one way to put it," Zane replies.

"I guess it's settled then. You stay here, and everyone else will attack." Cole turns around, to see the members of his team ready to begin the assault. "I need to get going. Try to stay hidden, okay?"

"I will be preeminent."

With that, Cole leaves Zane, the scowl returning to his face. He goes to the bag, picking up the remaining bow and arrows, and takes his position in a line with the other peasants. He glances around, and it seems like everyone is a little afraid. Time for some encouragement. _"YOU LITTLE SHITS READY?!" _He yells, earning little patches of laughter here and there.

"Good job, leader. You just told the entire other patrol our location." The peasant next to him says, rolling his eyes. Though he could see the peasant's smile- it made him happy. If they could all be in a good mood

going into this, it'll be easier. Good spirits means a good outcome, right?

Oh how he wishes he isn't wrong.

After a few moments of silence, in the distance, a gong sounds.

The match has begun.

His entire team seems to move like one, slithering into the forest like snakes- the only thing that would give them away is the occasional twig snapping, or the rustle of a bush.

To Cole, it was like walking into a dark room he's never been in before. He doesn't know what to expect, and something could pop out at him any moment. Though suddenly, Cole understands how Zane feels. Zane just wants to hide in the closet, away from all the scary things.

Of course, no barrier had been established. The teams had no sides. They merely split into two directions, and placed their flag wherever they liked. So no matter which side they were on, they were always in danger. All they had to do was take the other team's flag to their own without dying and they win.

For a brief moment, Cole regrets choosing all of the nimble soldiers. If it came to hand-to-hand combat, the other team would win for sure, meaning a bloody and painful death for the victim. No one wants to witness that, or partake in it.

A loud scream pierces everyone's ears. Cole looks around, trying to determine who died, yet it doesn't appear to be anyone on his side.

He nearly face-palms himself. Scott chose the laborers and the members of the royal court- a bad combination. They've always had some sort of rivalry, after all. The laborers aren't like robots; they believe that they deserve to be free. The members of the royal court... well, they've been raised with the whole system, so they're vicious with those beneath them.

In fact, it was probably a laborer who had been backstabbed.

More screaming in the distance is heard, and the sound of arrows being shot fills the forest with sound. The other team is attacking each other.

Shouts of pain, anger, and plenty of other emotions are heard. Though, after about twenty minutes of the same thing, it begins to slowly die out, like hot coals after a fire.

Either they calmed themselves down, or they've killed each other. Either which has a few peasants snickering quietly. The other team's given away their hiding spot. Cole knows he's going to win now.

"_ATTACK!" _Cole yells, and everyone breaks into a sprint, the robots keeping up in the trees.

When they reach the source of the yelling, however, all they find are dead bodies and trees littered with arrows. Blood oozes out of the bodies, some of it seeping into the ground like water. The bodies have arrows in them, some of the corpses ripped open with small portions of organs hanging out.

"…Did we win?" a peasant asks.

His question is answered by an arrow piercing his heart.

Cole aims his crossbow, and locates the laborer who had shot the peasant. He's about to shoot when about four arrows enter the man at the same time. Well, at least he knows his team is paying attention.

Cole speaks up, no matter how much he doesn't want to. "Everyone be cautious. You never know what might attack you."

Right after saying it, Cole dives on the ground. Just like he predicted, an arrow is lodged into the tree right behind him. Though there are few on the other team, they're out for the kill.

Cole remains on the ground for a few more moments, and looks up. Just like he had instructed, the robots are far ahead, past the other team. One just needs to get the flag, and they win…

-Zane, Forest of Tranquility, Ninjago-

Zane hides behind a bush, wiping away a stray tear. _Just remain calm, _He thinks, the fear eating him up inside.

He had heard shouting. Yells. Screaming. And now he's beginning to fear for the worst. _Cole is safe. He would never just… abandon you like this._

Though people have a tendency to do that.

The screaming had stopped, yet Zane is still quivering. He knows that if a human were to come hurdling out of the bushes, shooting arrows, the only thing he could do is scream. As loudly as possible, a bloodcurdling scream, to let the others know they were here. _Am I really capable of creating that much sound?_

He hopes he doesn't have to find out.

"Pst."

Zane looks up, to see a shadow with glowing eyes looking down at him. The luxury of safety fills him up inside, and he sighs.

A flag is dropped at his feet. The other team's flag. "Transport this to our flag. I am being pursued, so go as quickly as possible!"

Right after the robot had said it, the mechanical body falls to the earth, arrow lodged in the lifeless neck.

Zane gets up, leaving his crossbow behind, grabs the flag, and begins sprinting to the other flag. As he sprints, the dirt kicks up behind him while he dodges trees, leaps over bushes, and just in general avoids any obstacles.

Arrows begin to shoot at the ground around his feet as a few members of the other team finds him, causing him to run faster.

The flag is soon in sight. Zane uses the last of his momentum to propel himself forward, and throws the flag towards his own. Due to his built-in accuracy, the flag lands next to the other one.

A gong sounds in the distance, letting all the soldiers know the game is over, and a team has won.

-Cole, Forest of Tranquility, Ninjago-

They've done it. The gong sounded, telling Cole his team won. Though he has to admit, although he's walking back towards where the flags are, he's a little worried. After a robot had dropped down and scooped up the flag, the remainder of the other team ignored the peasants, jumping into the trees and chasing the robots. If they had gotten back to their own flag, that means Zane could be dead.

When he reaches the flag, several members of his team are in a circle, cheering. Cole comes to the conclusion that whoever's in the middle must've won the game for them. He needs to congratulate them.

He lightly shoves shoulder away, and finally gets a good glimpse at who won.

Zane is on his knees in the middle, blocking his ears with his hands. It's obvious that he doesn't like the attention.

"Stop!" Cole yells, which makes the majority of the crowd quiet down. He throws aside a few more people before making to the center. He picks up Zane, throws him over his shoulder like a bag of potatoes, and begins to head out of the forest.

-The camp, Forest of Tranquility, Ninjago-

"Good job, fellow soldiers!" The general yells as they all arrive back in the camp, a large grin on his face. He spurts out more cheesy sayings like that while everyone else arrives, and he then gets serious again. "So all we have are a few more simple competitions before you get chosen!"

"Hold the fuck up," Cole says rather loudly, placing Zane on the ground. "You told us that we were playing a fun game of capture the flag. That was a death game! And now you're saying we have a few more 'simple'

competitions before we're chosen? Is it just me or does this seem like bullshit?"

"Trust me, the next ones are not deadly. They involve no weapons, and are used purely to test your physical strength. No fighting will be involved. First, we'll be doing some sprint races. Then, weightlifting. After that, for the final test, we'll be swimming in strong currents."

"What if someone can't swim?" Cole asks, worry beginning to grow like a tumor in his mind.

"If you can't swim, you'll be given a lifejacket. After all, we can't afford to lose any more of you after the other team's dumb decision." The general replies, a scowl forming on his lips. "So who's ready?"

…

Cole finds himself laughing. "If you're a robot, shouldn't you weakness be water?"

After a long afternoon of competitions, they had just finished the swimming competition, which Zane won. Cole had expected Zane to drown, or be swept away by the currents like everyone else without lifejackets. But instead, Zane had gone underwater, and swam under there the entire time, beating everyone else who either had to come up for air, or stayed on the surface.

Cole, himself, had won the weightlifting competition. With the lack of laborers and members of the royal court, the were almost no competition. For him, lifting weights was like lifting up a twig- he used to have to carry huge boulders, which were a lot heavier than what he had to lift for the contest.

For the sprinting, neither had scored first, yet Zane had gotten a good fifth place. Cole was around the middle, but he doesn't mind. Running has never really been his thing.

"We were created to resemble humans closely, meaning we are capable of drinking water, and being situated in the substance."

"Uh, cool," Cole replies, unsure of what to say.

They've been placed in a long line, where their future trainers look over each soldier. Cole hates it. To him, it feels like he's on display. Though when he looks at Zane, the robot seems perfectly fine with the situation. Right. Zane's been sold around, so Cole's sure that he's been through this before. Just try to look like they want you to. Which, by looking at Zane, is exactly what he's doing.

However, he does the complete opposite. Whenever one comes to look at him, he furrows his eyebrows, and glares at them with as much hatred as he can muster.

Though when a man, whom looks decently old, walks right in front of him, the glare doesn't seem to effect the man. He sports a long, white beard, something Cole finds a little… funny. But he won't laugh.

Almost as if the elderly man keeps Cole in the corner of his eye, he looks at Zane. "You two are friends, yes?"

"I guess so." Cole replies, his voice full of resentment.

"I'll take both of you, then." The man says. "My name is Sensei Wu, and I will be your instructor."

Zane bows respectfully, though Cole remains standing. "I am Zane. My obstinate companion here is Cole."

"It's a pleasure to meet you both. Now, how about we go to the other camp to meet your two other comrades, hm?"

So, who here likes bad endings?

This chapter is a little longer than usual, and I am sorry about that. I hope you all liked it nonetheless!

So like usual, please review!

~Emily

7. Chapter 6

06/19/2013

So, I'm nearing one hundred reviews with **_six **_**chapters? I love you all so much! **

**For Jay and Kai's little training camp, I'm not putting much detail into theirs. It won't even take a half a chapter. Maybe a couple hundred words max. This is so I can get on with the plot, which is taking way longer than expected. **

**For this chapter, I'm introducing Pythor, and some other Serpentine, along with the capital of Ninjago: Ouroboros. **

Enjoy!

-Wildwood Forest, Ninjago-

Kai is aggravated to the extreme. First, they announce he's now equal to any robot. No, a robot is equal to _him. _Second, he's been put into come training camp. Why is he here? He should be in the Dark Island, slitting Lord Garmadon's throat for kidnapping his sister. He should be thriving, rescuing his sister, getting a large reward, and then continuing his life as a blacksmith. He shouldn't be here, stuck with a ton of menials. Not only are they inferior, but they're all so hopeless, thinking they might

get out alive. By the looks of them, they're all going to die in the first day on the battlefield. Their bodies will then be shipped back to their families, telling them their husband or son is a large failure. Such a failure he couldn't even defend himself, and allowed himself to die at the hands of that evil nation. Kai could spit at the thought. How pathetic.

A few people have tried to socialize, but he just waves them off. He's not here to make friends. The only goal he has is to save his sister, and nothing –or anyone- is going to get in his way. Once he gets a trainer, he'll abandon the guy and his troop, going off on his own. Sure, the others will probably die without his aid, but what are they to him? They're not important. They're probably incompetent to the point where if you gave them a knife they wouldn't know what to do with it.

Of course, after the little capture the flag game and those competitions; he's realized that maybe not everyone is useless. He doesn't even care that he didn't win any of them. Not winning anything doesn't mean he can't fight, after all. What does weightlifting have to do with war anyways? In fact, he feels bad for the poor soul who believes that he'll get far because he can lift a few pounds.

A man stands in front of Kai. Kai looks him over, making the presumption that this man may or may not choose him.

He nearly laughs. Who _wouldn't _choose him?

"Can I help you?" Kai asks, not bothering to mask the arrogance in his voice.

"I cannot help you, but you can help me. Those who have spoken to me have said that I choose and you do not, yes? You are coming with me."

Kai is about to speak up when another speaks before him. "Wu!" a voice yells, the body following close behind. Kai examines him. Brown hair, thin, lacking any general muscle, and a scar above his right eye. A peasant. Maybe, just maybe this man is even worthy of his time. After all, a scar means he's been in a battle before, right? The man pants, resting his hands on his knees. He looks up at Kai and gives a friendly smile. "Hi, I'm Jay. You?"

Kai smiles. "Kai."

Jay stands up straight, and shakes Kai's hand. "Pleasure to meet you. I guess we're going to be in the same troop, huh?"

"I guess so," Kai replies, and looks at the elderly man. "You're Wu, I'm assuming?"

Wu nods. "Yes I am. Your other troop members are waiting for you. Shall we get going, now that we are ready?"

Jay shrugs, not really caring. "Sure."

"Let us get going, then."

-Ouroboros Kingdom, Ninjago-

The kingdom sports a large castle, seemingly made of sandstone. Its towers seem to shoot into the clouds like arrows, giving it a rather… menacing appearance. The city surrounding it is made of the same stone, yet sharpened to look much more modern than every other village, city, or town in Ninjago. Tall walls surround the city, blocking it from the various sandstorms outside, in the rough desert. It would be perfect for a snake, would it not?

That's exactly what Pythor wants. He wants a city big enough to please their god, the Great Devourer. According to legend, it's a gargantuan snake capable of eating an entire city in one bite- if revived, it will be perfect for keeping any rebellions that threaten them. Though not that there are any rebellions, after all. Pythor's respected too much. Most believe that his little ranking system is perfect for their society, and order is just what they needed.

Pythor strides along the empty hallway, and stops in front of a full-length mirror, and studies himself. He wears a black long sleeve shirt, black pants, and purple royal robes. The neckline of the robes attaches at his chest, two chains linked together by a light blue topaz. His black boots reach up to his ankles, laces tied tightly incase of any upcoming action.

His face is one of a typical human. Kind of boney, a little bit of a 'V' shape, but what one might consider handsome. He has a long neck, but not long enough to be considered abnormal. However, his most fascinating facial appearance isn't his neck, or his facial structure. No, it's his glowing magenta eyes, with slits down the middle. Though when in public, he disguises them with brown eye contacts, which compliment his dark brown hair.

In his hand lies his Anacondrai staff. It's one of five staffs, each representing the five other Serpentine tribes. The Hypnobrai, the Venomari, the Fangpyre, the Constrictai, and lastly, his own, the Anacondrai. The five tribes had ruled the surface world many years ago, but were locked up in underground tombs when defeated. They had recently resurfaced, and Pythor had taken the throne of Ninjago. The rest of his tribe is dead- but that doesn't mean his isn't the most powerful.

He turns to his right, and continues down the granite hallway, which is almost identical to all the others. Granite floors, granite walls, and statues of the Great Devourer eating humans placed occasionally. It's beautiful.

The walk to the throne room is a few mere minutes away. He needs to find Slithraa, his royal advisor. However, when he's about to turn a corner, he nearly bumps right into Rattla, whom bows, shivering once he realizes who he almost ran into. "I'm sorry, lord. Excuse my clumsiness."

"It is quite alright. Don't you have any sort of business to attend to, rather than wandering the halls?" Pythor inquires, looking down at the Hypnobrai scout.

"I was sent to find you, sire. Slithraa says you were planning to meet him, and he said now may be one of his few moments of spare time," Rattla replies, before quickly adding, "not that he wouldn't make time for you, King."

Pythor chuckles. "I'm sure he would. Go rush on ahead of me, and tell Slithraa so he can prepare a huge parade for me like he always does." He quips, and Rattla obeys, running down the halls towards the throne room.

Pythor smiles.

This proposal may bring… mixed reactions.

-Unspecified location, Ninjago-

"Come on guys, can't we all just get along?"

It's only been a few minutes since he and Kai met their other troop members, and everyone is already fighting.

Everyone being Cole and Kai.

They're in a horse-drawn carriage, Cole and Zane sitting next to each other, with Jay and Kai across from them. Jay's surprised that no one's killed each other yet. He's trying to play peacekeeper, while the other guy, whose name is Zane apparently, is in a lotus position, most likely meditating. Jay envies him. Right now, he'd give anything to be in another world.

"We could if Kai wasn't such a fucking hothead."

"Or if Cole could shut the hell up and show some respect to his superiors," Kai replies, glaring at the laborer across from him.

"You're a special one, aren't you?" Cole asks with a smile, provoking Kai.

"I'll take that as a compliment."

"Guys, calm down!" Jay says loudly, causing them to be silent. "When we're out in battle, we need to depend on each other. The first thing we need is trust, and respect."

"Thank you, Jay," Kai states with relief, but earns a threatening glare from Jay. Well, as threatening as Jay can get.

"Not _that _kind of respect. Don't you understand? The whole system doesn't work for us anymore! What we were is nonexistent!" Jay exclaims, attempting to knock some sense into them.

However, it doesn't work.

"Look Jay, I personally understand that. But I think the entire thing is like a tattoo. It's carved into us. And if we want to remove it, it takes a lot of pain, and seems to take away a part of we are," Cole replies.

Jay nearly groans. He knows Cole's right, but why is it that hard to forget? Can't they just all get along, and be friends? At least tolerate each other?

"Well I'll be damned," Kai states, looking as though he's in disbelief.

"What is it?" Jay asks, a happy tone to his voice.

"A laborer shows a level of intelligence."

"I'll show you a level of intelligence, you little bitch," Cole threatens, leaning across the carriage as though to hit Kai.

While the argument starts up again, Jay casts a pleading look at the zoned out Zane. He could use some support right now, even if Zane is as loyal to the caste as Kai is. He just wants to talk to someone.

"Zane!" He quietly screams, his voice nearly lost in the shouting. The blond-haired man doesn't budge. "Zane, wake up!"

This time Zane shifts, yet doesn't open his eyes.

"I know you can hear me! Can you help me calm them down?"

Zane shakes his head, and looks down at the floor, despite the fact that his eyes are closed.

"Why not?"

"I do not wish to partake in this quarrel."

"Why not?" Jay repeats, the desperation growing in his voice.

In a single, fluid motion, Zane looks up, and opens his eyes, looking at Jay dead in the eye. Jay takes a moment to understand. His irises glow. He's a robot.

"You can still help you know."

"I do not wish to spark anymore loath."

"Then do it with your eyes closed. Just… be blind momentarily. Forget who you are."

Due to his submissive nature, Zane complies, closing his eyes again and opening his mouth to speak, yet never moving out of his lotus position. "I believe it is imprudent to detest one another at such an early stage of our alliance." Zane begins, earning surprised silence from Kai and

Cole. "Not only will it drive us apart, it will negatively affect us throughout the war. I am unsure of you, but I do not wish to die.

"For now, I highly recommend Jay speaking only to Kai, while I converse only with Cole. I advise Kai and Cole to not interface for the time being. Is this permissible with all?" He asks, using the last sentence as a bit of mockery. But knowing them, they don't know what permissible means, so it's all good.

"Okay wait," Jay says before anyone can begin talking. "Zane, it's a good idea, but maybe we could all talk to each other. Not about how we hate each other, or what we are… about regular things. Our favorite colors, or foods, animals… maybe we can find something in common, you know?"

"I can do that," Cole replies, and Kai nods in agreement. Zane continues to sit still.

"Okay…" Jay says, thinking. "Favorite colors?"

"Red," Kai declares, crossing his arms across his chest.

"Black."

"Black isn't a color. It's a shade."

"Maybe it's the shade of your heart."

"At least it's not blue."

At this, Jay looks at Zane, whose eyelids tighten at the reply. "Okay, maybe we can share something else." Jay looks around, and looks directly at Zane. Can robots have siblings? Hmm. Maybe he'll ask it in a different way than just asking. "Siblings?"

Cole shakes his head. "Not any that I know of."

Jay continues to stare at Zane. "Zane?"

"I have no brothers, nor sisters."

"I have a younger sister," Kai says with a shrug.

"You do?" Jay asks, interested already. "What's her name?"

"Nya," Kai replies, light hostility in his voice.

"What's she like?"

"What's it to you?" Kai snaps, furrowing his eyebrows at Jay, who falters under the gaze.

Jay puts up his arms in dismissal. "I'm just trying to make conversation."

Kai's gaze softens, and he sighs. "She's a spitfire. Quick temper, mocking sense of humor, and not afraid to take a stand." He pauses. "I know you might think of her as a curse, but I promise she's not so bad…"

"A curse? She sounds amazing!" Jay exclaims, smile bright and full of happiness. "After this whole thing is over, can I go back with you and visit her?"

"Hell no," Kai replies. "How do I know you're not creepy or something?"

"How old is she?"

"Fifteen."

"_I'm a year older than her!" _Jay emphasizes every word, making sure Kai gets the message. "And besides, I'm sure we'll be friends by the time we return."

"I'm leaving you guys once I learn how to properly fight."

"Why?"

"Nya was kidnapped. The only reason I'm in this stupid war is to save her."

"…Then we can save her! We can all help!"

Kai snorts. "I doubt it. Besides, I don't need help. I'm perfectly capable of doing this on my own."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm positive."

-Ouroboros Kingdom, Ninjago-

"King Pythor," Slithraa greets, bowing respectfully. "I believe you are here to see me?"

"I am," Pythor replies simply.

The throne room seems like a large hallway, stained glass windows lining the walls, with a large red carpet leading up to the throne. Pythor walks down the red carpet, pace slow, and balanced. "Whatever do you need, my king?"

The generals of the other tribes are there as well, bowing along with Slithraa. "I need your help with something."

"With what? Painting your nails?" Skalidor, the ripped, Constrictai general quips, earning a snicker from Fangtom.

"No. With controlling Ninjago."

"But sire, isn't Ninjago already in your control?" Slithraa asks, standing up slowly.

"If the Serpentine are to rule the surface world, we must show the citizens who's in the position of power. This means revealing ourselves, and forcing our beliefs onto the population."

"And just how do you plan on doing that? Not everyone is going to believe everything we do if we just tell them to," Acidicus replies.

"It's simple. We hypnotize them."

"You're insane!" Skalidor accuses, jumping up. "This is never going to work! The Hypnobrai can't do that! It would take so much power, and time!"

"We have the power, and time has never really been a problem for us, has it?"

"I guess not," Skalidor huffs, defeated.

"Do I have everyone's approval?"

The generals all stand at once, bow, and say in unison,

"Yes, master."

**Thank goodness, I can finally get this plot moving along. And I know I don't give many thanks for all of your reviews and love, but I appreciate it so much! Time for some fanfic-related notes. **

**Yes, Kai is designed as a douchebag. But I've actually created a code for how they speak with one another, so if you guys could crack it later on in the fanfic, that would be pretty clever of you. **

**There is going to be character development. Their attitude's towards each other will change, and other stuff too, but I'm not giving any spoilers. **

I was asked if Nya will be seen anytime soon. The next chapter will be focused solely on their training, and the next few will have some event, so I can't really give a yes or no. You **_will **_**be seeing her again, and once she's met again, she'll become one of the main characters.**

I hope this helps clear up some questions. PM or leave a review if you have any other questions!

~Emily

8. Chapter 7

**HOLY SHIT: ****Okay, I was scrolling on Facebook, and came across the **_**funniest **_**thing I've **_**ever **_**seen! So it turns out these "green ninja's" help the actresses with their hair flips during commercials (if a green screen is the back round), and someone responded with a picture of Lloyd. I might just go cry in a corner now.**

**Time to answer some guest questions. **

**Hot Potato: So if Garmadon is in charge of the other army, where does that put Lloyd? Is he going to be part of this story? Answer: Lloyd is son of the ruler. He will be a prominent part of the story. **

Enjoy!

-Monastery, Ninjago-

"Are you going to keep your eyes closed forever, or is this just a temporary thing?" Kai asks Zane, nudging him with his elbow. Zane steps to the side, trying to leave space between him and Kai. Well, him and anyone who comes near him.

They stand in a large courtyard. The building around them is in the shape of a half-square, full of rooms, with a tower in the middle. The stone floor of the courtyard seems worn out, seemingly from years of use. In fact, the entire building looks ancient.

They stand at the entrance, awaiting Wu's arrival. The carriage had taken them to the base of large mountain, which they had climbed up. Though Zane had been on Cole's back the entire time, since he still refused to open his eyes. Though now he fears Kai may be suspicious. Suspicious of what he is, of who he might be. And frankly, Kai terrifies him. Sure, he's not in power anymore, and can no longer really hurt him physically, but verbally is another way of hurting him. It was the insults that have always lowered him. Not the abuse.

"Kai, just leave him alone," Jay says, a cool tone apparent in his voice. Zane feels relieved, yet a little scared. Kai's bound to suspect something if Jay just jumps to his defense like this.

"Do _you _know what color his eyes are?" Kai persists. He stands on his toes, towering over Jay, whom looks at Zane with a worried look on his face. Zane merely responds with a nod, and points his head at his feet.

"They're blue," Jay replies simply, trying to act as nonchalant as possible.

"What kind of blue?"

"Light. Like… the sky on a nice day! And come on, who doesn't like nice days? Well, other than when you get sunburn. Sunburns hurt. You know what else hurts? Getting hit in the face." Jay inhales, and continues, "could you imagine being hit in the face with a baby? _Boom! _Small feet and hands coming towards you at twenty miles per hour. Then you'll topple on the ground, and that hurts too, but you've probably just received a black

eye after the baby hit you in the face. Babies are just so cute, aren't they? Their tiny toes and fingers-"

"_SHUT UP!" _Kai yells, covering his ears with his hands. "My ears are going to _bleed _with all of your rambling!"

"Rambling?" Jay asks, pretending to be confused. "Man, I _hate it _when people ramble! Some people just never know when to be quiet, do they? Just talk and talk and talk and talk! And sometimes…"

Meanwhile, Zane takes Jay's verbose talking to leave, going off alone. Just under the base of the tower, he enters his lotus position, and lets his mind wander elsewhere.

…

Zane opens his right eye a slit. In front of him lies a large training set, where the others in his troop seem to be trying out. However, everytime they try, they get knocked off, either by swinging axes or large flails. He nearly chuckles.

"Are you going to join them?"

Zane turns his head to his left, closing his eyes completely as he rotates his head. "I would rather not. If I do, I will be discovered. I do not covet to see such a thing."

"Will you be discovered, or fathomed?" Wu asks. "Now. If you refuse to train, would you like some tea?"

Zane takes a moment to ponder the previous question. Would Kai really understand? He nearly shakes his head. Due to Kai's reaction with Cole, he's come to the conclusion that no, Kai will not'fathom' him. Zane's impossible to fathom. Nobody will ever understand him. It's impossible. Too many wires. Too many switches that have yet to be switched. Too many buttons that have yet to be pressed. Too many emotions he hasn't felt yet.

"I would, thank you," he replies, accepting the cup of tea.

"You must open your eyes at some point," Wu says, slight wisdom tingling in the words.

"But if I do, I will be execrated."

"Not that kind of opening your eyes."

"Wha-"

Wu stands up, motioning for Zane to follow. The robot does, being careful of where he steps. "Greetings," Wu says loudly, causing the other to stop their training and turn to him. "It would appear not all of you have met."

"We have," Jay says. He points to Zane. "That's Zane." He points to Kai. "That's Kai." He points to Cole. "That's Cole." He points to Wu. "You're Wu."

"Who is Kai?" Wu asks, raising an eyebrow.

Jay and Cole point to Kai in unison, though Wu just shakes his head. "No. _Who _is he?"

"Blacksmith?" Jay asks.

Wu shakes his head.

"Arrogant?"

"Asshole," Cole suggests, shrugging, earning a glare from Kai.

"All you see are the outer layers. The icing on the cake. That is not who a person is," Wu begins, "it's who a person appears to be."

Zane processes this. Maybe Kai just _appears _to be what he is. Maybe he _will _be fathomed.

Zane opens his eyes. The brightness of late afternoon hurts his eyes, but he doesn't do anything. He stares straight at Kai.

Kai doesn't do anything at first.

Though he snaps in a few moments. "You couldn't have picked a worse troop, could you?!" Kai screams in anger. "You had to pick a rebellious laborer! Then you choose some sort of believing peasant! And nowI find out you've picked a _robot?! _This is absolute bullshit!"

"Kai, calm down-" Jay begins, but gets cut off.

"I'll calm down once-" Kai points at Zane, "-_it _is gone!" Kai storms off, exploding into a nearby room.

For a few moments Zane is frozen, like he can't move. However, in a little while, he looks at the ground, sniffles, and strides in the opposite direction, entering another room. In it lies a single bed with white sheets in a corner, with wood walls and floor. Nothing else.

Zane throws himself onto the bed, burying his face in the pillow. The temptation to just cry a little fills his mind, but he doesn't. Someone could walk in at any moment. He already looks weak enough as it is. He doesn't need someone to see him in a worse state.

Why is he so stupid? Couldn't he have just let Kai know who he was at the beginning, and they could've avoided all of this? Sure, Kai would still hate him, but at least he wouldn't have yelled at him like that. He wouldn't have had to see Kai scream in fury at _what he is. _Kai could have just gotten mildly angry like he did when he met Cole. Zane wouldn't have to deal with the guilt of disappointing someone.

There's a small knocking at the door. "Zane, can I come in?" a familiar voice asks.

He doesn't answer. It's not because he doesn't want to. No, it's because he doesn't know how. He's never had to give anyone permission to do anything.

"Too fucking bad for you I'm coming in anyways."

The door opens, yet Zane doesn't move. Maybe if he doesn't do anything Cole will go away.

"Look Zane, Kai's a jackass. Just ignore him. You do know that Jay, Wu, and I don't think of you the way Kai does, right? You don't have to talk to him, and he doesn't have to talk to you. In fact, Jay and I are going to ask Wu if us three can train together and Kai can train separately. Then you won't have to see him until we have to fight."

"I do not hate Kai," Zane says, lifting his head from the pillow, "what he stated is completely... fathomable. He is merely believing what most believe. It is pardonable."

Cole takes a hesitant step forward, but quickly steps back into the doorway. "You may be right, but that doesn't mean he wasn't a douche to you. Or to everyone."

"Wu just taught us to not look at the exterior edges. Is that not what we are doing? We are judging what he seems to be. Not what he is."

"Then who is he? Does he become more of a prick on the inside?"

"I do not know. However, he does care for his sister. His sister is under Jay, and just above you. He loves her nonetheless. He is capable of the emotion of love, so why is he not capable of kindness?"

"Because. He just isn't."

…

Kai kicks the wall with all of his strength, only to have a jolt of pain shoot up his leg. _Okay, ow. Bad idea, _he thinks, hopping on his left foot, holding the injured foot in his hands. _Damn I'm an idiot._

"Kai, are you in there?" Kai hears Jay ask outside, and he groans.

"Sadly," he replies, his voice tight with pain.

Jay comes rushing in, slamming the door behind him. He helps Kai sit on the bed, a fake concerned look on his face. "Are you okay?"

"I… kicked the wall," Kai replies hesitantly.

"Well that was _awfully _smart of you," Jay says sarcastically, rolling his eyes. "You're an idiot, you know that?"

"Yeah, kicking the may have not been the smartest idea-"

"Not that," Jay cuts him off, voice full of ice, "that little tantrum you threw out there was stupid. We all knew, and did we care? No! You're the only one here who's actually close-minded and racist enough to say that! Everyone _hates _you right now! I know that it's pretty normal with everyone else, but if you're going to earn our trust and respect, you might want to keep those thoughts to yourself. Because nobody wants to hear it."

Jay gets up to leave, but casts a glance over his shoulder. "Oh, and Cole is cooking tonight. If you don't want to be poisoned, I wouldn't recommend going."

He opens the door, walks out, and slams it behind him.

Kai rolls his eyes. "Everyone here is retarded."

-Ouroboros, Ninjago-

Skales can't believe it. Why isn't he allowed inside? He may not be a general but he's got wits.

Slithraa is a fool. Pythor does have some good ideas, sure, but releasing the Devourer? They'll be killed! Not only is it huge, but if Pythor and the generals believe they can tame it, they have feathers for brains.

According to legend, the Devourer will devour the entire surface world. The Serpentine are currently _on _the surface world. If they release the Devourer now, they'll all be consumed! The Serpentine will go extinct, and if they even manage to _survive_, what will there be for them to dictate over? They can create more robots, but that's just not as fun as ruling over humans.

He sighs.

If the humans did survive, they'd give big houses to those who followed them with large loyalty, and none to those who didn't partake in their style of life.

Rather than telling them to follow them or die, they would tell them to follow them or suffer. After all, some don't mind dying, so what's worse? Merely dying, or living in a nightmare? An inescapable nightmare- the Serpentine have gone through it already, being locked in a tomb for thousands of years. That had been torturous. There was nothing to do but fight against each other, sleep, or just wait for the hunger to overcome and kill you.

Ostensibly the Anacondrai tribe is dead. Pythor is the only one left, and Skales heard that he wasn't general when his tribe was locked into their tomb. The tribe hadn't been given enough food to last them all those

years –the humans were terrified of the Anacondrai so much they wanted them to just die- and the tribe had to convert into cannibalism, Pythor being the only survivor, thus making him the official general. He had worked his way up, sucking up to the generals and populous of Ninjago, promising them great power if they allowed him to rule. Though when they all refused, Pythor was so enraged he killed the current king, and then claimed the throne for himself. Skales is sure the only reason there have been no assassination attempts is because he hasn't changed anything from when the other king ruled.

"I believe that's the end of our meeting," Pythor says inside, causing Skales to press his ear to the door. He missed the entire discussion! How could he be so stupid?

Well, there are always other ways to get information.

A low chuckle rises in his throat as he feels the slight weight on his right sleeve. Inside lies a blade. The blade is dipped in goliath tarantula venom, which paralyzes the victim, should the knife not kill them instantly. The victim is rendered helpless, allowing the murderer to kill them.

Only Skales isn't going to kill Pythor. No, he doesn't want to make it that bold. He's going to kill the one that would let him rise to a minor level of authority. His tribe's general.

In fact, out he comes now.

"Slithraa," Skales begins, barely able to contain his menacing smile, "may I speak to you in private?"

"Of course," Slithraa says, completely oblivious to what Skales has planned.

They make their way to an empty hall, where Skales keeps his façade of loyalty. "My general, is it too much to ask what you discussed at the meeting?"

"Not much, only some mere politics he wanted an opinion on," Slithraa replies, and stops in the hall. "Now, what is it you wanted?"

Skales smiles, bows, readies his blade, and looks up.

"Your life."

Skales launches forward, knife shooting out of his sleeve. It sinks into Slithraa's stomach, causing the general to collapse on the ground. Skales gently pulls out the knife, looking at the general with a smile and gleam in his eyes. "You were a fine general, Slithraa," he says, placing the tip of the knife against Slithraa's chest, "but now it's time to say goodbye."

He thrusts the knife into Slithraa's chest. He then checks for a pulse, and once it's gone, he grabs the staff.

He can already feel the power of the general status surging threw him like white waters.

And damn, does it feel good.

Okay I lied about the whole training bit apparently. Uh, sorry, I guess?

**IMPORTANT: I will be taking a leave of absence for the next eleven days, so do not expect an update anytime soon. **

Once again, if you have any questions about the chapter, or what's happening, I'll be happy to answer! So leave a review, or PM me!

~Emily

9. Chapter 8

07/14/2013

**Back from camping, and getting hypothermia as well. Yay me. **

So thank you all for getting me past the one hundred review line! I guess this can't suck **_that **_**bad. **

While camping, I **_did **_**in fact do a lot of thinking. I came up with a bazillion ideas, including what Garmadon's character is going to be. **

**Today's chapter being based off of my white water rafting experience when I went camping. So, in general, this one will be a little more comedic –and pointless- than the others. **

So I was told that when I used the word "retarded", I might have seriously offended some people. Sorry if I did!

Like always, enjoy!

-Monastery, Ninjago-

Cole's groan could be heard from outside his room. At the break of dawn, the only thing he hears when he wakes up is a loud gong.

Maybe going to bed at midnight _wasn't _such a good idea.

He throws on some of his usual black clothes, and files out into the courtyard. Zane and Kai are there, meters away from each other, but there's no sign of Jay. Cole ponders where he could be, but comes to the conclusion that Jay's probably still asleep. Jay did stay up late with him. Oh, the fun time the two of them had. Kai, Zane and Wu had gone to bed, but the two of them decided to raid the kitchen to see what they could find. Tea. The only thing in all of the cabinets was tea. However,

they managed to unlock a false backboard in one of the cabinets, and it contained a large hoard of food. They decided to see who could whip up a chocolate cake the fastest, and both not being very good cooks, failed completely. They had left the kitchen in a mess-they both know Wu is going to yell at them. But it was worth it.

"Zane, do you know where Jay is?" Cole asks, choosing to ignore Kai's presence.

"I presume he remains asleep," Zane replies, and becomes confused when Cole leaves him, snickering.

Wu enters the courtyard from the main building. He looks around. "Where's Jay? I'm sure he heard the gong."

"Maybe if you say Nya's here he'll come bouncing out," Cole says, and Kai whips his head around to glare at him, but says nothing.

All are silent for a while. Cole doesn't know what they're waiting for. Jay, or for someone to do something?

Around ten minutes later, Jay trudges out of his room, yawning. "Why are we up so early? I need my beauty sleep."

"If you plan on serving your country during a war, sleep should not be on your list of priorities," Wu says while Jay joins the others in the line.

"But what about if we have to rest for battle?"

"What I mean is that you should not be counting on getting much sleep. Now," Wu begins, the finality in his voice saying the conversation is over, "who would like to guess what we're doing today?"

"Learning how to slit someone's throat?"

"How to shoot arrows?"

Wu shakes his head. "No." He begins walking back and forth, looking at each trainee dead in the eye as he passes them. "You have not learned to tolerate or trust each other," he snaps his head at Kai, and then at Cole, "and it will negatively affect your chance to survive. So now you'll be doing a team activity, yet one with risks. I've come across one that will challenge each of you physically, and mentally. You are going white water rafting."

"_White water rafting?" _Cole asks, disbelief written all over his face. "Isn't that something boy scouts do for fun?"

Wu pauses for a moment, and then begins walking away, saying over his shoulder, "you are going white water rafting whether you like it or not."

-River of Rapids, Ninjago-

After going over how to paddle forward and backward, Cole, Kai, Jay, and Zane push off the shore and into the rapids. Due to the rules, however, two strongest men go in the front, while the weaker go in the back.

That means Kai and Cole together in the front.

With each stroke, Cole looks at the water with uncertainty. He doesn't really know how to swim, and they didn't supply life jackets, so going in the front where he gets splashed by water is pretty unnerving. Well, in fact, Jay is freaking out a little more than he is.

"We're gonna _die!_" Jay yells, causing Kai to turn around.

"Dude, shut up! I doubt we're going to die white water rafting," he shouts back, and Jay reduces his cries to a quiet whimpering whenever a rapid hits him.

Cole doesn't hear from Zane, so he looks over behind him to make sure the robot is still alive, and Zane is, though the robot is just being silent. Like usual.

They all continue like this for ten minutes. Paddling, Jay screaming every few moments, all the while Cole contemplating why Sensei Wu sent them here. Is it really a team building activity, or is just to introduce them to some challenges they may need to face while at war? It just doesn't make sense to him. The whole expedition seems worthless. They go white water rafting, have fun in the rapids, and then arrive back at the Monastery in one piece. Well, if Jay keeps exasperating Kai, there's no way to be sure of Jay's fate...

Though after some time, due to lack of coordination, the troop finds themselves floating sideways down the river. They all try to figure out how to turn, but find an obstacle in their way.

There's a rock a few inches underneath the surface, so when the raft attempts to float over it, the rock halts the raft halfway through. Cole groans, realizing that they're stuck.

"Try shifting the weight!" Kai yells, his voice almost gone with the noise of the rapids. They attempt to do this, but all it does is worsen the situation. The boat then finds it self mostly submerged, in a rapid, while in hypothermia-temperature waters. Cole isn't getting all that wet, since he's at the head of the boat which is staying relatively dry, but when he turns around to check on everyone else, he sees that they're all in a much worse state. Zane is getting splashed, and is chest-high in water, since they're all on their knees on the inside of the raft. Kai is constantly being splashed by water, but he seems relatively okay. It's Jay that Cole's most worried about. He's nearly fully submerged, water splashing him every couple of seconds, barely giving him any time to breathe. He seems to be holding onto Kai's leg for dear life.

"How's everyone doing?!" Cole shouts.

"I'm fine, but I don't know about Jay," Kai says, looking down at the peasant.

Jay tries to say something, but his mouth fills with water before he can get a single word out.

"Zane, you good?"

"I am in a difficult position, but I am capable of remaining in the current state until we discover a way to exempt ourselves from the predicament," Zane comments, his voice unwavering and calm. Cole envies him. The robot seems to be able to hold his breathe for hours, so of course he's not afraid. He'd just swim out of there no problem! While he, of course, would be at the bottom of the river, water filling up his lungs until he suffocates and dies.

"We need to get Jay up here," Kai decides, and looks at Cole, whom nods in reply.

"Lower down both legs," Cole says, and Kai complies, which allows Jay to grab his ankles. Cole helps Kai lift his legs up, and when Jay is close enough, he grabs him and brings him up to where he is. Jay is shivering, and Cole swears that it's possible to hear his chattering teeth from miles away. Normally, Cole would call Jay a crybaby, or tell him to suck it up, but a wave of sympathy washes over him. Jay easily only goes up to Cole's shoulders in height, and he's rather slender as well. No wonder why he's so cold.

"Zane how are you doing down there?" Cole calls, and Zane looks up. Due to the sudden lack of weight on the bottom, Zane's part of the boat has gotten higher, while Cole's has sunk. Zane's still getting splashed often nonetheless.

"I would appreciate moving to where you currently repose, yet if I were to shift the weight more, the entire boat would flip. I do, however, believe that if we were to swim, there's a chance the water pressure would free the raft due to the lack of weight. Though I assume not all are in a state to swim," Zane says, looking at Jay with slight worry displayed on his face.

"Cole…"

Cole turns his attention to Jay.

"There's something written on the side of the boat next to you... try to see what it says..."

Cole looks at the words. They seem to float in the air around him, some letters upside down, while some just don't seem right. They seem to mock him for his incompetence.

"Fuck." He hates himself for it, but knowing that Jay won't be able to do it, and Zane on the other side of the raft, he turns to Kai. "Can you read it?"

"Can't you-" Kai begins, but catches on rather quickly. "Fine, but it's not my fault you're so stupid." Kai leans over, examining the words. "Says exactly what _it_ said," Kai says, motioning to Zane. "It says that in a case of emergency, we need to evacuate the raft."

"We should partner up," Cole decides. "Kai, you should take Jay. I'll go with Zane."

Kai nods. "Jay, we're going to go first."

"Can we just wait…?" Jay asks. "Please? I don't want to go back in the water…"

"Wait for what?" Kai snaps, obviously fed up. "The water to turn off? C'mon, we're going now." He grabs Jay, who struggles against his grip, but Kai, being stronger and Jay being weak at the moment, manages to keep him taut. He jumps into the water, Cole hearing Jay yell when they resurface.

Cole helps Zane up to the front. "Can you swim?" Zane asks, though Cole's sure he already knows.

"Not really," Cole replies sheepishly. "I picked you for a reason."

Zane looks around, studying the raft. "I am going to go myself. According to the circumstances, the raft should leave the grip of the rock once I remove myself. Remain on the raft, and you will not be forced tread any water."

"Okay, but if this doesn't work, I'm breaking your fucking legs," Cole quips, and laughs. "I'm kidding. Now go."

Zane nods and dives off the boat, not resurfacing even while he's still in Cole's field of vision.

Cole feels the raft begin to tug off the rock, so he starts budging it to make the process speed up. Soon enough, the raft leaves the rock, and he finds himself speeding down the river, with no paddles.

"Well shit."

-Ouroboros Kingdom, Ninjago-

In Serpentine religion and culture, murdering one for their power is respectful. Though Skales doesn't want Pythor to distrust him, so he keeps his recent sin to himself.

"It's a real tragedy," Skales says, emphasizing the 'S' like always, "but I believe it's time for a new Hypnobrai leader. Slithraa always said he wished for me to be his successor, so I presume that it would be in best interest that I become the new Hypnobrai general."

Skales and Pythor walk down a corridor. Just like Pythor, Skales is forced to keep up his human exterior. "Is that so?" Pythor asks. "I'm not a fool, Skales. I know it was you who assassinated Slithraa. But I am quite… content about it. Slithraa was too kind, and allowed the humans to faze him. At a meeting once, he stood up for them, saying that they're just as deserving of a happy life as we are."

Pythor chuckles, while Skales' anticipation builds up. Could Pythor seriously be considering letting him be the Hypnobrai general?

"Does this mean you're allowing me to become general?"

"Yes Skales, it does. Though promise me one thing." Pythor abruptly stops, and looks at Skales dead in the eye. "Do _not _double cross me. If I see a single sign of betrayal, I will make sure your life here is worse than it was in the tombs!"

Skales nods. "Of course, master." Skales bows. "I don't covet to dethrone you, but merely help you in your crusade for the integration of Ninjago with Serpentine culture. I'm just waiting for the moment when we can shed these silly costumes and show our true selves."

They enter the throne room, where Fang-Suei awaits them. "Sire," Fang-Suei begins, bowing before Pythor. "There's a letter addressed for Slithraa. But since he's not here anymore, who should I give it to?"

"Give it to Skales," Pythor says, and strides past the Fangpyre.

Fang-Suei turns to Skales. "Here," he says, giving the envelope to Skales, and then rushes out of the room.

Skales gently opens the envelope, and reads the letter inside while walking towards the throne.

Slithraa,

_If you don't know me, my name is Nya. I'm Kai's -you know, the royal blacksmith in Ignacia- younger sister. A week ago Lord Garmadon's army abducted me, and I was just given the chance to write to Kai. I don't know where he is now, so is it possible that you could send this to wherever he is? _

_Underneath this paragraph is a made-up language only Kai will understand, and it's rather personal, so I would appreciate it if you didn't attempt to decode it. _

Thank you,

Nya

Underneath, just like this Nya girl wrote, is a ton of numbers Skales doesn't understand. Though he knows he should be cruel to these humans, but it seems as though Kai must've known Slithraa, and he's a member of the royal court, so maybe he _should _send it to him. It's not like it

has any military information about the Dark Island. Their spies know just about everything by now.

He turns to a servant standing near the throne. "Track and send this to Kai. He is or used to be the royal blacksmith of Ignacia, so it shouldn't be too complicated to find him."

-The Monastery, Ninjago-

When Kai and the others arrive back at the Monastery, Kai's surprised to find Sensei Wu waiting for him. "There's a letter for you."

He rips open the envelope, not caring about polluting the earth. "It's from Nya!" he exclaims, causing Jay to run over to him.

"What does it say?!"

Kai turns his head and gives Jay a hard glare. "Dude. Back off."

When the still-shivering Jay leaves, Kai continues reading the letter.

Slithraa,

_If you don't know me, my name is Nya. I'm Kai's –you know, the royal blacksmith in Ignacia- younger sister. A week ago I was abducted by Lord Garmadon's army, and I was given the chance to write to Kai. I don't know where he is now, so is it possible that you could send this to wherever he is? _

_Underneath this paragraph is a made-up language only Kai will understand, and it's rather personal, so I would appreciate it if you didn't attempt to decode it. _

Thank you,

Nya

Kai looks at the bottom of the page, where Nya replaced each letter with a number. It's a secret code they made a few years ago, and Kai's surprised he still remembers it. After a bit of practicing, he finally understands it completely, and is able to read it fully without any problems.

Kai,

Surprisingly, I'm okay. Garmadon is actually really nice, and everyone else here is too! He's not the tyrannical ruler we were told to believe he is. He's a really great person, and only abducted me so I could take care of his child! Though you can still come and punch him in the face if you want. I'm still kind of pissed off with him not asking me and stuff. The kid himself, Lloyd, is actually really cute and sweet! In fact, he wants to talk to you!

Hi I'm Lloyd I'm my dad's kid! Nya wants me to introduce myself properly so I will appaprrantly our world is more nice then yours so haha have you ever sene a dog befor becuase there really cute and I'm sure you woud be jelos if you saw 1 there that cute. Nya told me that you put hair gelle in your hair. You must be such a girl! I really wanna meet you so can you come over as soon as possablle? Can you bring me a stuffed animal if you do? Can you can you can you can you can you?

Yeah, English is a subject we're working on. We both hope that you do come visit! Maybe rent a boat or something? I'm not sure, but Lloyd does want to meet you! He keeps bragging to his friends about how his "Uncle is the coolest because he's a royal blacksmith". Though then he'll meet you and realize you're not as cool as he thinks.

Just kidding! I really only wrote this letter to tell you I'm okay, and that I'm happy. You don't need to worry about me whatsoever! Write back if you can!

Your sister _and your "nephew",_

Nya and Lloyd

Do any of you know how **_painful **_**it is to purposely write grammatical errors and misspell things? **

So, I think this gives a clue about what the next chapter will be about! That's right folks, Nya and Lloyd! Because other than the Serpentine part, this chapter **_was **_**kind of pointless.**

Oh, and the link to a picture of my idea of Zane's eyes is on my profile! Go check it out if you're having trouble imagining them!

Please review!

~Emily

10. Chapter 9

**So just as I said, this chapter will be solely focusing on Nya and Lloyd! **

Oh. Just letting you know, **_someone **_**may have gotten the Garmadon thing. Then someone else was way off and I just did a mental face palm. One full of empathy. The letter wasn't that clear, but I made it that way on purpose. Though I promise any questions you may have should be answered.**

Enjoy!

-High Peak Kingdom, Dark Island-

The castle looks menacing from the outside. It has a black -maybe even dark purple- color to ward off any unexpected visitors. Humans _are _very

visual creatures after all. Though another defense mechanism may be because rumor has it all over Ninjago that the Dark Island has evil witchcraft and sorcery. The rumors are true, of course. The Dark Island is the only nation capable of producing supernatural humans, though not all are born with these magical capabilities. Those who are born mundane -lacking magical qualities- tend to lean towards a simple life. One of a trader, or a teacher. Those with supernatural powers find themselves serving the lord, possibly as knights or personal enchanters.

When Nya first heard this, she was in awe. How come Ninjago had never taught her this during her history lessons? It just didn't make sense.

Though now it's clear to her. The government wants the population of Ninjago to believe that Ninjago is a paradise, while those who settle in the Dark Island are bound to suffer.

"Nya!"

Running out of the school, where Nya's been waiting for a bit, she sees the young boy she's taking care of. A small, blonde, eleven year-old boy named Lloyd. She still can't get over how amazing the job is, even if she was kidnapped and forced to do it against her will. She can still remember her first conversation with Lord Garmadon, Lloyd's father.

…

_Nya was dragged to the throne kind-looking man awaited her with a smile on his face. _

"_Let her go," the man said, and the guards let go of her arms, leaving her in a bow on the floor. "Ah, Nya. My name is Lord Garmadon. It's a pleasure to meet you." _

_Nya spat on the floor. In Ninjago, it would be taken as a great offense. Yet Lord Garmadon didn't seem fazed at all. _

"_I apologize for our sudden entry in your life. But it was proven… imprudent that you were brought here." Lord Garmadon shifted in his seat, looking a little uncomfortable with the situation. _

"_Why do you want me here?" Nya asked, curiosity and hatred conflicting inside of her. _

"_I have a job for you," Lord Garmadon began, choosing to stand up rather than sit on the throne, "and it requires skill I believe you have. I want you to take care of my child." _

"_Excuse me?" _

"_Ever since a few years ago, my son, Lloyd, has been without a mother. I tried hiring several nannies, yet not all seemed to care for him. They were instructed to teach him his education, yet they just let him play all day. So I began looking for the perfect nanny, and then I was told that I should search Ninjago. We scoured every city, town, and village,

yet no one appeared. Then we found you. I sent spies, and they watched you for a month, and when you passed each qualification, they took you to me. Now you're here." _

"_So you want me to take care of your kid?" Nya demanded, standing up. "Just do it yourself, you lazy sack of shit!" _

_Nya knew she shouldn't have said it, but she didn't care. Unless he forced her, she refused to be okay with it. _

"_You don't understand. I have work all day-"_

"_To hell with that! My brother had to raise me _and_ work at the same time! He was ten years old!" _

_Garmadon paused. Though after a few moments, he seemed to find something to say. "Please? I'm paying you a ton of money, and Lloyd really needs it." _

_Nya didn't understand why she was falling for this. But she just couldn't watch another child's innocence be usurped away from them. "Fine, but you realize that you're leaving your child in the hands of a murderer, right?" _

"_I know." _

…

Even now she can't believe she gave in in so easily. Maybe it's because of Kai. He had been so young. She had to watch him be picked at by the royals, the peasants, those _vultures_, until they had sucked out all of his compassion and replaced it with hatred and ire. Maybe she didn't want another child to go through that.

"Hey Lloyd!" she puts on a large smile, and says every word with happiness. "How was the last day of school?"

"It was _awesome! _We got to have a party and play outside all day and have fun!"

"Hmm," Nya says, tapping her chin with malicious thinking. "Since you only had a half-day today, how about we go get some ice cream and go to the beach?"

Lloyd jumps around, most likely excited by the idea. "Can we really?"

"Sure, I don't see why not. Come on, let's go!"

-High Peak Castle, Dark Island-

Lloyd bounces into the castle. He just can't believe how exciting and fun this day has been! Oh, how he wishes he can do this everyday…

Nya leads him to the throne room. Maybe he can see his daddy! He's always working, and sometimes that makes him sad… but oh well! Now that he's out of school for three months, he gets to see his dad almost everyday! He just can't wait!

Once they enter the throne room, they nearly bump into someone right on the other side of the door. "Hey, watch it!" The person exclaims.

"Sorry. We're just trying to see Lord Garmadon," Nya explains, but the woman they bumped into scowls.

"We all are. Did you hear about how Ninjago is launching a war on us? We have no defenses! What would happen if they won? What would happen to our children?"

Lloyd watches as Nya nearly laughs. "Everyone from Ninjago is stupid. Their brains are so corrupt they probably can't see ten feet in front of them. The kids will be fine."

"But what about those social classes? I don't want to be thrown in there!"

"Well, it kind of depends on the kind of person you are. If you're a sick bastard your life rises, but if you're all for equality, your life goes down the drain."

"How do you know all this anyways?" the woman asks, and then gasps, leans in, and whispers, _"Are you a spy?"_

"I'm not a spy. And I know all this because I used to _live _there. It was Garmadon's decision to have me here anyways. So if you want to survive this, take my advice: Ninjago is nothing to worry about." Nya grabs Lloyd's hand, then begins to push through the large crowd –maybe even a mob- until she reaches the front, where Lord Garmadon sits on his throne, looking flustered. "What's going on?"

Lord Garmadon looks up, and smiles with relief. "Thank goodness you're here. The word about the war spread around, and now everyone is demanding answers on things. You used to live in Ninjago, so why don't you help?"

Lloyd sits on his father's knee and watches as starts Nya barks orders at the large crowd. "Everyone, you need to calm down!"

The crowd doesn't seem to hear her, and they all continue to scream questions at the top of their lungs. Nya turns to Lloyd and Garmadon. "Do you have one of those... voice amplifiers?"

Garmadon nods and whispers something to a guard. In moments, a megaphone is in his hand. Lloyd smiles when he sees it. "Can I use it? Please?"

Garmadon looks at Nya, whom nods. So he gives Lloyd the megaphone, and he jumps off of his dad's knee. He stands behind all of the guards that block off the crowd with Nya, and begins yelling into the megaphone.

"Hey! You all need to be super duper quiet right now, because Nya wants to say something!"

The crowd falls into silence, which makes Lloyd smile.

Nya takes the megaphone from Lloyd. "Okay, raise your hands like the decent screw-ups you all are, and I'll call on the one least likely to make my eardrums bleed!"

A few hands shoot up, and Nya points to one. "Um, if we're so unprepared, what's going to happen if they win?"

Nya groans. "I'll answer this one, and if anyone else has this question, please leave." Nya looks at Lloyd for a moment, and motions for him to go back to Garmadon. He complies. "Do you want to know what's going to happen? Hell. Why? Well, let's just look at the basics. Ninjago has some social structure, and knowing those who rule, you're all going to be doing hard labor. Except for the chicks. But believe me, it's not all that much better."

She points to another hand. "How powerful will the army be?"

"Considering the fact that they were just drafting them randomly... probably not all that great."

What seems like a million of _boring _questions later, the crowd leaves and Lloyd gets to have some alone time with his father. With Garmadon always leaving due to royal tasks, Lloyd finds himself without his father quite often. It's not really fun, because he doesn't have many friends. He intimidates most kids at school. Those who aren't become friends with him, and act all nice, but after a month or so it turns out they were just using him to get close to the royal family, or to ask him to buy them gifts. Other than his father, Nya's the only one who doesn't seem to care about his royal blood. The castle staff seems to be terrified of him. Though Lloyd understands why, it still hurts when they leave the room if he enters it. And because of his mother's fate, he's not allowed to be alone- only when he's sleeping. Even then there are guards stationed right outside his door, weapons ready.

Lloyd looks at his father. His father sports shaggy-looking gray hair, a tired gaze, a white long-sleeve, a black vest, and black pants. A faux bone is placed horizontally across his golden crown, giving it a slightly menacing look. But nonetheless, he looks like the perfect leader.

In Lloyd's eyes.

Though his father is starting to get old, and Lloyd knows it's time to start growing up. Since the 'disappearance' of his mother, he's lost a lot of his education, and he's struggling to catch up with his class. Nya's going to tutor him during the summer, and frankly, he's excited. He loves learning new things, no matter how boring other kids think they are!

However, what he's most excited to learn about in the summer is how to fight. He had learned the basics when he was younger, but now that he's finally eleven years old, he gets to learn how to slay enemies. Well, maybe it's not his age, but he knows that he's going to fight in the war coming up! He'll be the one to plunge the sword tip into the evil man who rules Ninjago, and he'll be the hero of both nations! He smiles everytime he thinks about it.

"Daddy, can you tell me the 'Tale of Two Brothers' again?"

Garmadon sighs, and ruffles Lloyd's hair. "It all started a long time ago. There were two brothers, and they used to play and get along well as children. When they got older, they both met a fair maiden and both loved her very much. But the maiden chose one brother over the other, and the other brother got very jealous. They fought and fought and fought, and eventually… they drifted apart. They haven't seen each other since, each making sure to live far away from each other. Now Lloyd, you need to remember something- never become jealous, and never do or say anything to make another jealous. Can you promise me that?"

Lloyd gives a childish laugh. "You make me promise everytime you tell me it!"

"I make you promise because I don't want you to end up like one of the brothers."

"Daddy you take this story way too seriously!"

"Yeah… I do…"

…

"Pick a card."

Nya sighs. Lloyd has this weird obsession with chance and magic tricks, and while she loves that he's his own person, sometimes it can get plain annoying.

She picks a card from the deck.

"Now pick five more."

She picks five more.

"Now give them to me."

She gives Lloyd the cards, whom throws the six in the air. When they land, however, they don't just fall. They rearrange themselves into a specific order, wherein Lloyd examines them.

"Wow! That's super far away!"

"What do you mean?"

Lloyd pauses. "These cards say when something really good is gonna happen in your life!"

Normally she would argue with this logic. Yet she knows that whatever Lloyd is saying right now is true. Card are inanimate objects. They don't move. They're clearly enchanted, and Nya finds it kind of… frustrating. She's never liked the idea of magic. Those with supernatural powers shouldn't be using their powers for illogical reasons such as enchanting cards and such. They should be using their magic to heal the sick, or to help the poor! Though maybe it's because of Lloyd. She likes him, and he's really nice, but she finds him spoiled. He gets whatever he wants, and if he wanted to, he could tell someone to commit suicide and they would in the blink of an eye. He always has to have a bodyguard, and he's never once had to skip a meal.

Nya could tell that he knows this, however. Lloyd will often donate his money to various causes, and it's needless to say that he's generous. But Nya will always feel a strange anger whenever something like that card trick happens.

Though suddenly Lloyd hugs her. "I'm so glad that it's so far away!"

"Why?"

"Because last time I tried this they left and never came back on that day."

It takes Nya a few moments to understand it. "Was that person your mother?"

Lloyd looks up at her, his eyes red, most likely from holding in tears. In that one look, all of the anger she feels dissipates.

"How did you know?"

She wants to answer, but she can't. Not right now. She just hugs Lloyd tighter.

After a minutes of this, Lloyd leaves the embrace.

"Can we get ice cream again tomorrow?"

I AM SO SORRY!

My cousins were here all week, and with me babysitting them, I didn't have a moment of time to myself to write this. I literally wrote it all in one day. But now that I have more free time, you can expect the updates to most likely going back to their usual rate. So once a week I guess?

So if you have any questions or comments, make sure to leave a review or PM me!

~Emily

11. Chapter 10

I just realized that I'm getting nowhere with this story.

Okay, I don't know if you'll read this, but this is for the guest reviewer Jade: Healing has been discontinued. I'm sorry! You can keep on reading this one if you want though! I plan on continuing this one until it ends! I'm really sorry!

Time to start moving on!

Translation for Japanese words at the bottom author's notes****

Enjoy!

-The Monastery, Ninjago-

Jay's jaw drops. He swears that if it were physically possible, it would be on the ground. Maybe like those cartoons he used to watch as a kid. He wouldn't mind making the reference, but knowing Kai's the only one with a chance of ever seeing them, he decides against it. He's trying to avoid causing any drama at the moment.

"I've never seen something so beautiful in my life…" Kai says, running his ringer along the face of the blade. "Well, other than the swords I made."

They were told to choose a weapon. Yet none expected to walk into this large room with weapons displayed all over the walls, sharpened and polished to the point where the blades seem to glow.

Yet Jay isn't attracted to the blades. No, another weapon seems to be calling out to him. Urging him to come try and use it. Or, them, to be precise.

He grabs the nunchucks off the wall. He can't describe it, but just holding them feels… natural to him. Like it's an extension of himself. He swings them around, just passing the handles back and forth between his hands, and it seems to flow perfectly. It's as though time has slowed down, giving him a chance to be careful as to where they go flying.

When he stops, he finds himself out of breath.

Jay looks around. Since he's chosen his, he may as well just help the others get theirs, right? In fact, it looks like Cole is having trouble.

"Hey Cole, need help?"

"I don't know. I'm just trying to figure out how to use my strength to an advantage."

Jay perks up. Being an inventor, he had to master physics and science, so now he can finally put his knowledge to use! "You're pretty strong, right?"

Cole just nods.

"So assuming that you've never been taught how to control your strength, you don't want a weapon where you could break it by applying too much force. Get a heavy weapon, so with your strength and its weight combined, you could send a light-weighted enemy flying on impact."

"Like a giant hammer or some shit?"

"Sure. But you _may _want a blade or whatever on the end. Just in case."

Jay scans the walls. The assortment of weapons is large, so Jay's eyes dart over each one, not giving a weapon a second glance as his mind works quickly. _No, too small, not big enough… aha!_

He takes a large weapon off of the wall, and shows it to Cole. "How's this?"

"Looks like a giant pickaxe."

"I was thinking more Grim Reaper thingy, but sure!"

"It's a scythe." They both turn to Kai, who merely shrugs. "I was a blacksmith. Getting a weapon name wrong in front of me is like not being able to lift up a stick in front of Cole."

Cole opens his mouth as if to say something, but after a moment, closes it. Jay hands him the scythe, and watches the burly young adult swing the weapon. Satisfied, Jay turns to Zane, whom seems to be having the same problem as Cole. "Hey Zane, need help?"

Kai groans and leaves the conversation. Jay winces, stealing a look at the robot, who seems unaffected by it. Or just doesn't show it. "Kai, don't be a fuck."

"Hey, it's just a natural reaction," Kai says, putting a hand up dismissively.

"It shouldn't be."

An argument breaks out between Cole and Kai, causing Jay to sigh. Do they ever shut up?

Unnecessary insults are tossed back and forth, tons of swearing, being mean to each other because of their position on the caste, and just about everything Jay can't stand. Though it's when the two choose to fight it out, with their new weapons, that Jay loses it.

The two are inches away from each other, the glaring intensifying which each said syllable, and each step closer. Jay thrusts his arms between

the two, mustering all of his strength into pushing them apart. "Guys! Stop!"

Though they ignore him. "Whoever loses has to jump off the mountain," Kai says, and Cole nods in reply.

Jay runs up to Kai. "Kai! What if you lose? You won't be able to see your sister again!" he pleas, desperation apparent in his voice.

"Come on, I doubt I'll lose. This guy has never used a weapon before- unlike me, who's been using a sword since childbirth."

"You guys need to sort out your issues or something!" Jay exclaims, and then his face brightens. "We should all have a group counseling session!"

"We don't need fucking counseling," Cole says, a slight laugh in his voice.

"Trust me, you _all _need counseling."

-Ouroboros Kingdom, Ninjago-

"Pythor, could _please _explain this useless war?"

Pythor chuckles at the question. "You have much to learn Skales, but now is not the time. The current recommendation would be to get on my good side and not ask many questions. Don't want your general status to be revoked, do you?"

Skales had found Pythor in a dark room, the only light illuminating a table with a map of Ninjago. Yet the map doesn't mark off cities, like a usual map. This one shows Ninjago without cities, or roads. Complete natural land, which confuses Skales. How would this help anyone get anywhere? Or find a city on a map? The map has colorful question marks all over, some crossed out, most likely from a failure to do or find something. "What are you trying to find, sir? Or is this question not permitted, and if so, I'm terribly sorry."

"I'm trying to locate the Fangblades. Have you ever heard of them?"

"They're what's used to revive The Great Devourer, correct?"

"Indeed. This is purely in case the hypnosis fails- the Serpentine can then release The Devourer, which will consume the surface world. Though this is only a last resort- if a rebellion grows too strong, perhaps. Or if the Dark Island actually manages to win. We could use it to consume all of the Dark Island, and teach them the lesson necessary. It's an imprudent backup plan."

"I doubt the Hypnobrai will _fail,_" Skales replies, taking the minor accusation to full offense.

"I hope they won't," Pythor snaps. The tall man takes a deep breathe in, regaining his patience. "Excuse my impatience. The search is becoming a

lost cause. Every inch of Ninjago has been searched, yet there's no sign of the blades."

"Perhaps…" Skales begins, and lets out a small gasp. "What if the Fangblades aren't in Ninjago?"

"Meaning…?"

"If the humans knew about them, I'm sure they sent them off somewhere else to be hidden. What if they're in the Dark Island?"

Pythor pauses for a moment, tapping his chin. "It seems… logical. Thank you Skales. I'll make sure to get some troops or spies to find them for me."

Skales smiles. If he keeps this up, he'll get on Pythor's good side. What more could he ever ask for?

Well, he knows one thing.

But that can wait.

-The Monastery, Ninjago-

After privately interviewing all, Jay has come to a conclusion. Yet just asking questions and getting answers won't help his conclusion. No, it'll take some time to make sure what he thinks is true. And even when that happens, he's not a great judge of character.

Though now they await Wu. The old man promised them that they would be leaving today- off to the Dark Island, even if they've had little to no training. Completely reckless, if you ask Jay. Why would they be sent off to war if they don't know what they're doing? Sure, they'll have Kai, who seems to have already mastered his weapon, but the rest of them are dead meat. Plus, if they're going to fight in the large army they're supposed to meet up, Kai won't even be with them. He'll be in the back, whilst the underlings are forced to serve in the front lines of the war. Sure, Jay will be in the middle, but it's still kind of scary. Though it's not like he has a wife or kids at home he just doesn't want to die! The possible outcomes are making him anxious. What will happen to him? Will he survive the first battle? Or is this Garmadon nice, and will let him live?

He shakes his head. He needs to think of something that makes him happy, or intrigued.

Nya.

Kai says she's rebellious, but what if she has the same condescension Kai does? Will she be rough around the edges like Cole, or submissive and quiet like Zane? Or will she be like him? Positive and funny –well at least he thinks he's funny- and kind? Or will she be her own person, different from everyone here?

Though many questions fill his mind, there's a specific question he can't seem to get off his mind. Because according to the letter Kai received, the leader of the Dark Island isn't the 'tyrannical ruler' he was promised. He seems like a nice guy. So if Garmadon isn't bad, and they're randomly launching a war on the nation like that… are they the bad guys?

He slaps his cheek. No, there has to be a reason. Everything happens for a reason, right? Besides, what if Nya was being forced to write good things in her letter? It would only make sense. But if everything happens for a reason, there's a reason behind Nya's abduction. It sends a shudder up his spine to even thin about it.

Wu enters the courtyard, a satisfied smile on his face. "Thank you for your patience. Now, the ship you will be boarding is at the bottom of the mountain."

"Uh, last time I checked, the mountain isn't surrounded by freaking water," Kai says, crossing his arms. Jay's still blown away everytime by Kai's impatience. It's like patience doesn't even exist inside of the body.

Wu laughs. "This ship doesn't need water."

"So are we just going to say 'hi-ho!' and then crash through mountains and tear up dirt until we _reach _water?"

"As much as I hate to admit it, Kai has a fucking point."

Wu continues laughing, and seemingly wipes a tear of laughter from his eyes. Though as soon as the laughing started, it ends, and Wu scowls like usual. "Follow me."

He leads the way out of the Monastery, the four troop members following him down the rough trail of the mountain.

…

At the base of the mountain lies a large ship. The bow has a red dragonhead on it, which Jay finds looks quite magnificent. The two large sails have red streaks on them, and resemble fans. The entire ship itself seems to have that kind of style, the boat painted red and brown, with flames aligning the sides. The living area is similar to a traditional Dentō-tekina Nihon home, the kind Jay's used to living in. Even though he wants to burst with joy, he keeps it inside. Only the wealthy can afford those, and whilst he's not wealthy, his grandparents sure were. His parents inherited a lot from them.

"What's she called?" Kai asks.

"Destiny's Bounty," Wu replies, and climbs up the anchor that's on the ground, and atop the large ship.

"There's no door?" Jay asks, baffled.

"I guess we better get climbing," Cole decides, and heads up to the anchor, before looking up and seeing how big the climb is. "Fucking hell."

Whilst the others climb up, Jay's mind races. Physical activity? Not his thing. As a kid, he ignored it all together, preferring to stay inside and play with toys all day. When he grew out of the toy phase he began reading books about mechanics, picking up a large liking for the subject.

Though now he sees where that rope in gym class could have helped him.

Jay looks to his right. Zane stands there, with the same expression on his face Jay has. Jay nearly face palms himself. Of course Zane was never taught how to climb things. Why would they teach him something he could use as a mean of escape?

Jay looks up to Kai and Cole, whom look down on them, both trying -and failing- to hold in their laughter. "Oh my- you _nerds _geez!" Cole exclaims, laughing.

"Should we help them?" Kai asks, still laughing.

"I don't know, it's the challenges that'll make them strong little shits."

"The fact that you two get along when mocking others is highly annoying!" Jay yells up.

The two exchange a look, and then take a few steps away from each other. Kai leaves with an aggravated groan, and Cole is left staring down at them, a look of over-exaggerated melancholy. Though Cole just shrugs after a moment, and looks back down on them, the smile returning to his face. "Need help?"

"That would be appreciated!" Jay yells up, and Cole nods.

"Uh, Zane, any ideas? The chain's too heavy and I'm drawing a blank here!"

Jay looks at Zane, whom seems to analyze the ship. He turns to Jay. "If there is an anchor, then it is possible for the two of us to be pulled up. Presuming there is a crank, Cole should be capable of utilizing the device, pulling us up with ease."

"Find the crank for the anchor and turn it!" Jay yells, simplifying Zane's explanation so Cole can understand it. "We'll just climb on while it's being pulled up!"

Cole nods again, and runs out of sight.

Jay just can't wait to see what's inside.

-Ouroboros, Ninjago-

Journal entry #156

_The day has gone by… kind of successfully. I was able to gain Pythor's trust, as well as helping him locate the Fangblades. _

_How foolish of me. Why would I help Pythor continue his reign? _And _help him release the single creature that will surely be the cause of my demise. Yet for some reason, I want to help him. It must be part of Pythor's blasted demeanor. _

Aside from that, I was able to sense something…peculiar with my newly heightened senses. Venom. However, it didn't smell like Venomari venom. It was different… evil smelling. I can't put my finger on it, yet the source is at the tip of my tongue. Or nose, for this matter. I will have to see the venom itself tomorrow. It could be dangerous, maybe even fatal. Perhaps for those who double-cross Pythor…?

_After taking a quick rummage through the library, I came across something. A legend, a theory. It states that if a Fangblade kills one, they arise from the dead, and become another form. A Serpentine, depending on the blade the person is stabbed with. Though knowing quite a few humans, this would not settle well. To be murdered and then be forced to become a serpent. It just leaves me to wonder if the Fangblades would work on a robot. They would be ever so useful with their artificial intelligence and clairvoyance. The Serpentine could benefit from that. Though since I am not all evil and do not wish to waste a perfectly good robot just to kill it, I need to settle for something lesser. Certain sources tell me of a young man in Jamanakai Village. He happens to be a mechanic, and if the rumors are true, he's constructing an emotionless robot. I plan to seek him out and ask him to build a robot prototype for me. If this works, he'll be paid. If not, killed. We can't have others questioning why a higher-up is demanding for such a device. If this gets to Pythor…I refuse to even think about it. _

_I think I hear Serpentine coming down the hall towards my bedroom. I'll continue my investigations tomorrow. _

Good night.

Okay so this came out a little late. I had writer's block. And oh shit I only have five percent left, so I'll make this quick! I know the journal entry may not make sense, though I find it rather blatant. Please, if you have any questions concerning it, you can ask, though I'll only be able to give you an indirect answer, and a hint! But I love seeing your predictions on the outcome of the story, so leave a review or PM me! It makes my day!

Dentō-tekina Nihon **= Traditional Japanese**

~Emily

12. Chapter 11

**Uploading this using my friend's Wi-Fi. Hell yeah. **

**This is a bit of a Kai chapter. Yes, character development. After twelve chapters of nothing. **

I hope you like it!

-The Dark Island-

The beach is black. It has the same feeling, the same texture, but not the same look as the sands of Ninjago. In fact, the entire island looks dark and evil. Unlike Ninjago, which looks inviting from afar. For example, if one were to soar above both nations, Ninjago would look bright and fun while the Dark Island would look dark and scary.

Kai's led to the shore, where water touches his boots. The army is huge, scaling a large beach and the front lines on the edge of the forest. Kai has mixed feelings about being forced in the back. He doesn't mind the sacrificing of robots and laborers, but he doesn't want to fight only in the end, where he'll barely be able to kill anyone. Sure, his chances of survival are much higher than they would be if he were lower on the caste, but the lack of bloodshed will most likely make him rip out his hair. He also needs to find Nya, and if he's in the back, he has a smaller chance of slipping away and entering the kingdom, where he can see her. If what the letter said is true, he's not sure of what to do after that. Nya's sure to be happy, and he's her brother. He doesn't want to take that away from her.

"Were you stuck with losers in your training troop too?"

Kai looks to his left, where another one of his ranking stands. He wears the same backpack and outfit as him, designed specifically for members of the royal court. The lower on the caste one is, the worse the gear. "Yeah, I guess I was. What was yours like?"

"Oh man, don't get me started. I was put with a peasant and two laborers. The peasant was okay, but the laborers were rude as fuck. So in the night I broke their ankles. They can barely walk-they' sure to die," the man replied, a sick laugh at the end that almost makes Kai wince.

Kai shakes his head. He's among his own kind, he should be able to rant about how he hates everyone. "Well I was put with a peasant, and laborer, and a robot. The robot was a little too nice to me, the peasant treated me as an equal, which wasn't _so _bad, and the laborer always wanted to pick fights and such. Though I didn't really hurt them or anything."

The man looks at him with a confused look on his face. "Why didn't you kill the laborer and just get him out of the way?"

"It was purely verbal. I would have defended myself against him if he attacked, but killing him? I don't think I would do that."

"Pfft, I would've killed him in an instant. He sounds like too much of a problem to be kept around for much longer."

"Hey! He argued with me, but it's not like he was freaking _disrespectful_. Besides, the fights never got too far. The peasant served as the peacekeeper before things got too serious."

The man begins to complain about his troop some more, and Kai finds himself pondering what he just did. Why did he defend Cole? It's not like this guy is going to find Cole and kill him for no apparent reason-Cole doesn't know how to fight, and is most likely bound to die during the first attack. Just like everyone else in his troop, Kai realizes. None of them had their proper training, and now they're going to die when they have to face an opponent. Pfft, not like Kai cares or anything.

Yelling at the front signals the beginning.

All Kai can do is sit back, relax, and watch the show.

-Zane-

A magical dome encases the forest just next to the beach, closing the soldiers off from the rest of the island. Yelling is heard from the inside of the dome, and Zane nearly jumps. They have… magic? Wait, no, this isn't possible. Magic doesn't exist. It's physically impossible. It breaks the natural order of things. Well, Zane supposes that his existence breaks the natural order of things, but he wasn't born. He was invented, pieced together.

Screaming is heard, and Zane focuses his vision forward. He's not on the very front line, maybe a little further back towards the laborers, but he'll still die first. And frankly, it scares the living daylights out of him. He feels like dropping to his knees and crying, but oddly enough, he doesn't, and tries to focus on the rafting incident. He had remained perfectly calm, not freaking out, even though he could have died in some way. Using all of his might, he shifts his fear onto the subject. All of his worry and doubt as well. After doing this, his vision seems to clear. He doesn't need to worry about the present. Or the future. Just the past.

They're all the same, anyways.

A large, purple, transparent hand suddenly shoots out of the dome, snatching up the group of robots in front of Zane, and taking them into the forest, where the only thing left of them are their screams. Zane gulps. The other robots have begun swarming around, horror present on their faces, trying to find a safe place to hide. A mob tries to run to the side, only to have a magical wall block their way. Zane stands there, watching with terror. Weapons are dropped on the ground, and the robots begin throwing themselves against the wall, desperately trying to break the barrier with all their might. Zane turns to look at the laborers, who don't try the same, but look terrified.

Another hand shoots out, grabbing another bunch near the wall, dragging them back in, despite their bloodcurdling screams. Some have resorted to falling on their knees and praying, begging for someone to save them. As more and more robots are snatched up, Zane drops to his knees, not

praying, but crying. This is it. His end, to be seized by a magical hand, most likely to be killed in a mass murder.

The hands stop coming, but beams shoot out, striking robots with incredible accuracy. A beam comes towards him, and in an attempt to save himself, he rolls to the side, the beam just missing him. More beams come, sending him screaming in pure terror whenever he has to roll out of the way. Robots drop all around him, and soon, when he's one of the few left, he accepts his fate.

He sits perfectly still as the beam is sent flying towards him.

-Kai-

Screaming is heard at the front, yet the only thing Kai is able to see is a shield of some sort cover the area past the beach. The robots are being slaughtered, and here he is, doing nothing. He hates it. He probably won't even get to fight-the moment the generals realize that they're bound to death, they'll send the members of the royal court and the remaining peasants straight back to Ninjago.

Those around him laugh. Cruelly. They laugh as the robots scream in desperation to live, as they beg for mercy, as they're brutally murdered-Kai can feel nothing but contempt towards them. Those who have willingly served them, who _sacrificed _themselves are dying, and they do nothing but laugh. It disgusts him.

The screaming soon comes to an end, and a single voice projects itself from everywhere. "Your robot friends are dead-surrender now, and we may spare you as well!"

Those around Kai all yell in protest, until one voice rises above the others. "You won't win! You're hiding behind a shield, it's pathetic! Come out and fight!"

A cloud of dark smoke makes its way over the crowd, until finally resting in the protesting man's mouth. It only takes a few moments for him to drop.

"Any others wish to protest?"

The crowd quiets down, and the voice returns. "All of you must leave, or we will exterminate every last one of you. Do I make myself clear?"

Nya. In the remembrance of her, Kai's mind starts racing. He needs to find Nya, he needs to make sure she's okay-he can't go back to Ninjago. Not now. Not since he's so close.

Without thinking, he pushes his way through the crowd. When he reaches the front, he doesn't know what he'll do, but he'll do something. He has to find Nya. Not finding her would be pure torture to him. He doesn't want to resort to just being pen pals. Besides, the letter she wrote to him could be fake. She could actually be locked in the dungeon, not being

fed or taken care of properly. She could be tied above a volcano, where he'd be forced to use some ancient weapon to free her.

Where did that come from?

Reaching the front of the crowd, he nearly trips over a body. The corpses of those who weren't taken away litter the ground, blue blood splattered over the sand like a canvas. He makes his way towards the shield, and in the it second he looks up, he stumbles over one, but catches himself before he falls to the ground. He looks back at the body he fell over, and his heart skips a beat.

Zane.

"Uh… Cole… Jay?!" Kai yells, but knows they won't hear him, no matter how silent the crowd is. He puts his ear to the robot's chest, already expecting the lack of beats from a dead heart.

But he does get beats, from a struggling-to-survive heart. Zane's alive. In fact, looking at all of the other robots, they all are.

But barely.

Kai doesn't know what to do. He'll have to find a way to keep Zane alive. He scours his memories for a memory of a teaching, one that taught him how to save a life in peril. He floats around his memories, choosing to remember some, but having to dodge out of the way of other memories. Soon, he finds the memory he's looking for.

Kai looks Zane over. He looks like he could be sleeping- no blood, no wounds, no anything. The spell that was cast must be affecting him on the inside, eating away at his heart or brain. Soon he'll die and-

"Kai!"

Kai looks over his shoulder, but doesn't see anyone. Though when he looks forward again, he sees a pair of camouflaged legs. A hand shoots out, and Kai takes it, only seeing the face when he's on his feet.

Jay.

"Never expected to see you here," Jay says.

"I have to see Nya."

"No, I mean looking _sorrowful _over a robot's body."

"I guess he wasn't so bad." Kai sighs, and then his face lights up as he remembers something. "You're a mechanic, right?"

"Yeah…"

"Could you heal him?"

Jay taps his chin. "I probably could… but the problem is, I don't know what happened to him. I can't help him if it's magic. But there's the possibility of shutting him down and then moving on from there… perhaps there's some sort of way to channel magic. Hmm. I think I'll just open up each panel and see if any of the switches and such are down…" Jay unbuttons Zane's shirt, and opens up the chest plate, which looks incredibly odd to Kai. It's like opening up a square of skin… he shakes his head. He'll try to never think about it again. "Aha! The magic turned down some switches. Like moving and such. So maybe they knew that they shouldn't kill them. What if they were just trying to scare everyone off? They _can't _be bad!"

Jay searches the panel, and gives a yelp of excitement when he finds something. He flips a switch down, and then closes the panel door. "What was that?"

"Oh, robots are designed to stop moving when they think. I turned it off."

Zane's eyes snap open, and Kai immediately helps him sit up. Zane looks around. "Where is Cole?"

"He had to deal with something first-he's coming."

Zane looks behind him at the ship. "But the ships are leaving."

"Hey Jay, why don't you go find him?"

"Uh, okay," Jay replies, and zips off.

Kai helps Zane stand up, throwing the robot's arm over his shoulder. "You, uh, okay there?"

"I am fine."

"What was it like?"

"What do you mean?"

"Were you dead? What did it feel like?"

"I was not dead. The magic flipped off some switches, which paralyzed my body and put it in a comatose state of existence."

"Oh."

They stay in silence until Jay comes back.

"Guys! I found Cole!"

Kai turns to see Jay dragging Cole, whom doesn't look too happy about the ordeal. A river of curse words flow out of his mouth, Jay protesting with each one that comes out. Kai takes a moment to notice how opposite the

two of them are. In personality, looks, and just about every aspect possible.

Kai gets out of the way, and sees Cole's eyes widen at the alive Zane. "Son of a bitch."

The four remain in silence for some time. In this time, Kai finds himself in deep thought. He's used to treating robots like bubblegum-chewing them up and then spitting them out. He went through several robots a week, not caring about them whatsoever. He's used to seeing dead robot bodies, yet for some reason, this time it doesn't bring a feeling of satisfaction.

Jay breaks the silence. "So, how about finding Nya?"

"You still want to find her?" Kai asks, surprised.

"I don't see why not. I mean, we're all together, and we're not powerful enough to fight in this war, so there's not much else to do. I also doubt that many of us want to return home anyways."

Kai looks at Cole, who shrugs. "Why the fuck not?"

He looks at Zane. "It would not negatively affect us in anyway-it seems like a good idea."

Jay gasps. "Since we're a team, we'll need a team name! How about 'The Ninja'?!"

"That's the worst fucking team name I've ever heard."

"Hands in!"

All standing up, they form a circle and put their hands in the middle, and in unison, all say, "one, two, three… Ninja!"

Okay, so no one actually died. I'm so happy to finally get this story moving-there will be no more dumb fillers! No more time wasting!

Please review,

~Emily

End file.